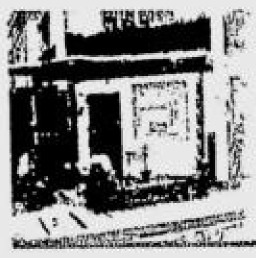

■ LIFESTYLE /C1

Best, worst of RP art; notable books in '05

■ SPORTS / A17

Flashy Fil-Ams rule the roost in PBL cage wars

■ NEWS / A2

Luisita workers demand P321M as share in land converted to industrial park

■ ACROSS /A13

Boholanos prepare hero's burial for Fil-Am soldier killed in Iraq

Judge's slay shocks kith, kin; 80-year-old ma not yet told

BY Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—JUDGE HENRICK GINGOYON, a 1978 law graduate of the University of the Visayas, made a name for himself in the city as one of its leading human rights lawyers, defending political detainees in the 1980s.

JUDGE'S/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Where loggers go, Brazilian worms follow

By Blanche S. Rivera

KAMI ANG BUBUNGKAL SA MGA SEKRETO NYO!

WANNA KNOW WHERE loggers have been? Earthworms can give you the answer.

A certain type of earthworm known as the

WHERE/ A6

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Monday, January 2, 2006 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 25 P18
website: www.inq7.net

GIs' case perils RP-US ties

DOJ: Arresting 4 accused of rape unfriendly act toward US

By Armand N. Nocum

AMID CALLS FOR THE ARREST of the four US Marines charged with raping a 22-year-old Filipino woman, the Department of Justice yesterday warned that Philippine-United States relations could be strained should the arrest result in a unilateral abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the Philippines must first negotiate with the United States to "return to us the custody of the accused" before the arrest warrants against the American soldiers could be served.

"We cannot arrest them and break the treaty unilaterally. That can become an unfriendly act with a country that is aligned with us," Gonzalez said.

This legal issue is bound to crop up when the court in Olongapo City raffles off the case tomorrow and the judge is called upon to issue warrants in accordance with the law, the justice secretary said.

"That is the issue that will ensue whether the warrants issued by the court can be enforced, considering the VFA provision," Gonzalez said.

Paragraph 6, Article 5, of the VFA states: "The custody of any United States personnel over whom the Philippines is to exercise jurisdiction shall immediately reside with the United States military authorities, if they so request, from the commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings."

Gonzalez said the Philippines could not just disregard the provisions of the VFA because a "treaty is a part of our laws of the land."

He said the VFA was ratified by the Philippine Senate. But Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann

GIs CASE/ A4

RAFFY LERMA

MIDNIGHT, JAN. 1, 2006: Brilliant patterns of light explode in the night sky over Manila as Filipinos from all walks of life sent up their own fiery celebrations to welcome the New Year.

Saying goodbye to the 'Hello Garci' year

By Christian V. Esguerra and Luige A. del Puerto

ALTHOUGH UNCERTAIN OF WHAT lies ahead, Filipinos cheered the arrival of the new year with bursts of fireworks and occasional gunfire as they finally bade good riddance to the year of the "Hello Garci" tapes.

If the Department of Health's statistics were any gauge, the revelry that marked the coming of 2006 was a bit rowdier than the previous New Year's celebration, as 448 people—mostly with firecracker injuries—landed in hospitals around the country from Saturday night to early Sunday morning.

The total number of casualties during the merrymaking last year was 407.

But while there were at least two people killed last year, no deaths were recorded in last weekend's mayhem.

The Philippine National Police said there was a nearly 50-percent drop in cases of firecracker- and gunfire-related injuries in Metro Manila during its monitoring period from Dec. 16.

"Success would be zero casualty. That's the ideal number," declared Director Vidal Querol, head of the National Capital Region Police Office.

There were also fewer fires and no fire-related deaths as of press time.

One PNP official noticed there were fewer firecracker explosions this year, based on what he observed during the peak of the weekend revelry in Metro Manila.

"They lasted for about 10 to 15 minutes," said Chief Supt. Jaime Caringal, head of the police's Civil Security Group. "I didn't even notice smog in the morning."

SAYING/ A9

ConCom's Cha-cha new battleground in '06

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE COMPASS OF THE NATIONAL AGENDA for 2006 points to constitutional change as the battleground that will decide whether President Macapagal-Arroyo will complete her elected term in 2010 or whether we will have a sweeping, top-to-bottom change of elected officials by next year.

In politics, a journalist's outlook is shaped by his daily encounter with reality, which makes him resistant to the optimistic views of governments. In the context of this tradition of skepticism, I choose to take the role of Cassandra, the harbinger of bad news, who prophesied the sacking of Troy in the midst of the 10-year siege of the city by the Greeks.

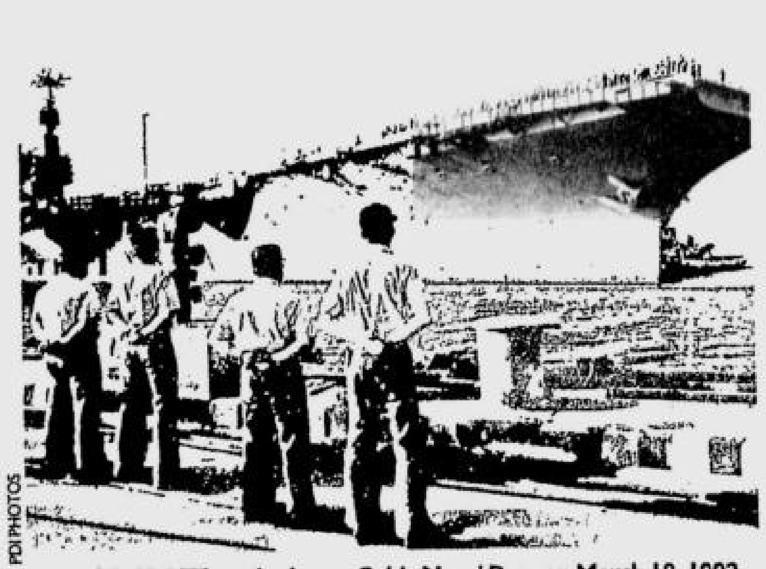
As a skeptic, I apply the test of skepticism with equal rigor to government, its enemies and political players from civil society and the Church who have taken on the role of political activists believing they can make and unmake elected governments. The same goes for civil society activists who have appointed themselves arbiters of political morality with the fanaticism of the Ku Klux Klan and the lynch-mob certainty of vigilantes.

It is from this position where I view the outlook for 2006, from which all the bunkum and humbug of self-appointed

CONCOM'S/ A4

NEWS BEHIND THE BIG NEWS

Senate kept secret votes rejecting US bases



PDI PHOTOS

A US AIRCRAFT carrier leaves Subic Naval Base on March 18, 1992, after the Senate rejected the proposed bases agreement.

SEPT. 16, 1991. Two of the Senate's "Magnificent 12" who voted against the agreement with the US: Senators Guingona and Maceda.

By Tony S. Bergonia

JOVITO SALONGA, THE SENATE President, was the most sought-after person in the old Senate building during those days in 1991 when the chamber pondered a treaty that would permanently alter the relationship between the Philippines and the former colonial power, the United States.

Salonga's office, a sparsely furnished room with books lying about everywhere, held the secrets that journalists wanted so badly to unlock during the deliberations for the ratification of the RP-US treaty that was to extend the life of the US military bases in the Philippines.

The secrets—mostly copies of

SENATE/ A6

Ninoy murder convict knifed dead in New Bilibid Prisons

By Tarra V. Quismundo

ALL DRESSED UP FOR THE SPEcial evening Mass, retired police sergeant Cordova Estelo was psyched up for the countdown to the new year at the maximum security compound inside the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa.

For the past 14 years, Estelo's Christmas holidays had been spent at the crowded prison ever since he and and 15 other soldiers were meted out double life sentences in 1990 for the 1983 assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. and Aquino's alleged assassin, Rolando Galman.

But barely four hours before midnight on Saturday, Estelo would be dead.

He died while trying to pacify Manuel Ocenar, a fellow inmate at Building 11 of the maximum security compound, who was on a drunken frenzy, brandishing a knife and a pistol.

Estelo died from a stab wound is his right side near his chest at about 8:45 p.m. on New Year's Eve, according to the death certificate issued by the NBP Hospital.

NINOY/ A4

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: JAMIE ALARCON, PDI RESEARCH/01/02/06

Luisita workers demand ₱321M of profits

By Blanche S. Rivera

AFTER WINNING A GOVERNMENT RULING to parcel out to them the nearly 5,000-hectare sugar estate of former President Corazon C. Aquino's family, the workers of Hacienda Luisita are now pressing to collect up to P321 million in "unpaid profits" they say is due them as shareholders, or co-owners with the Cojuangco's, of the company that owns and manages the farm.

The farm workers, represented by the Alyansa ng mga Manggagawang Bukid sa Hacienda Luisita (Ambala), are set to file with the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) a motion asking it to resolve the issue of the conversion of land belonging to Hacienda Luisita into an industrial park.

Jobert Pahilga, legal counsel of Ambala, said the PARC had resolved only the farm workers' demand for the revocation of the stock distribution option (SDO) that has been in effect in the hacienda for the past 16 years.

"What the PARC resolved was the revocation of the SDO, but that's just one of three issues we raised in our complaint," Pahilga told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

3 main issues

The SDO revocation, the stop to further land conversion and the release of 33 percent of profits from the conversion of 577 hectares of Hacienda Luisita land were the three main issues raised in the farm workers' complaint filed with the PARC in October 2003.

The PARC decided with finality on Dec. 20 to revoke the Hacienda Luisita stock scheme and to divide and distribute the 4,915-ha estate to the hacienda's thousands of workers.

Co-owners of land

The SDO was a mechanism provided for under Republic Act No. 6657, or the Land Reform Law which Mrs. Aquino herself signed into law, as an alternative to actual land distribution to tenants. Under the SDO, tenants were made co-owners of the land through the issuance of shares of stock in companies that owned and managed the land subject to land reform as in the case of Hacienda Luisita, or HLI.

Share of proceeds

Pahilga said the farmers would ask the PARC to compel the HLI to pay the workers around P296 million as their share of the proceeds from the conversion and development of 500 ha in 1996, and P25 million for the use by the Bases Conversion and Development Authority of another 77 ha for the Subic-Clark Expressway.

33 percent equity

The Luisita workers had received only three percent or P37 million from some P1 billion in earnings from the conversion of the 500 hectares into an industrial park, Pahilga said. The farmers should have received an amount representing their 33 percent equity as stockholders of the HLI, or about P333 million.

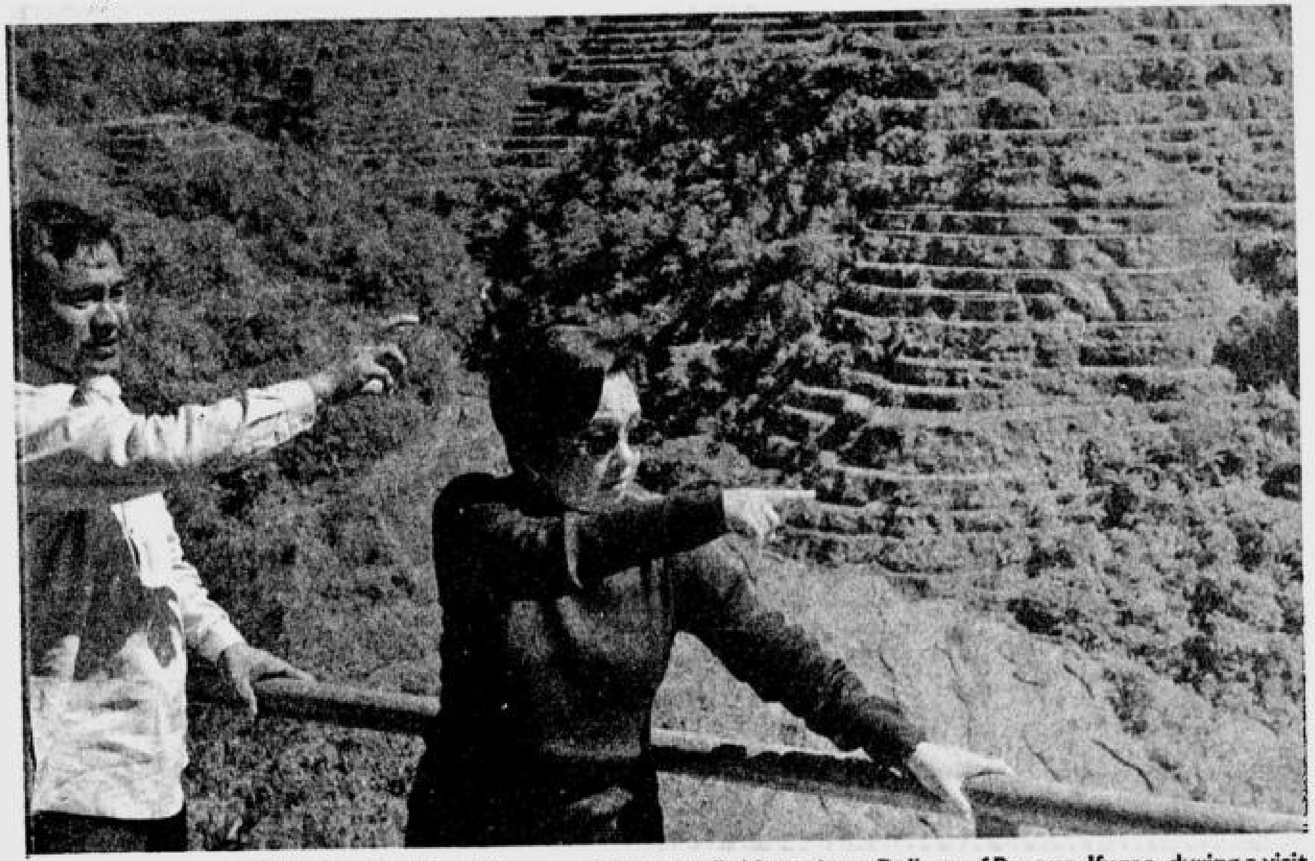
The three percent the farmers received represented their "production share," but Pahilga said this referred to farm output and not profits from the disposition of real property.

The Department of Agrarian Reform has said the government could distribute only around 4,300 ha of Hacienda Luisita because of the land conversions.

Go after HLI

"It's true that the land can no longer be distributed because it has been converted. But since it would no longer be distributed, then we would go after the HLI for what should have been given the farmers from the conversion of the land," Pahilga said.

Pahilga said the HLI could source the P321 million from the liquidation of the company's assets when the company is dissolved due to the SDO revocation.



PRESERVE THEM. This is what President Macapagal-Arroyo tells Mayor Jerry Dalipog of Banaue, Ifugao, during a visit to the famed Banaue rice terraces over the New Year weekend. The President, who has been pushing hard for domestic tourism, instructed Dalipog to oversee rehabilitation of some of the terraces that have crumbled. PCPO PHOTO

Quiet New Year for First Family

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—IN CONTRAST TO THE NOISY and rowdy gatherings in most parts of the country on New Year's eve, the First Family had a quiet celebration at The Mansion, the official presidential residence here where they are staying.

The only sound at The Mansion came from the drums of TSgt. Ruben Lorenzana, band leader of the Presidential Security Group Combo, who spent the evening playing for the First Family.

Earlier, the PSG band packed up at 5 p.m. from in front of The Mansion gates where they played pop and band music to entertain Baguio residents and tourists.

PSG civilian employee Michelle Narvaez and Sergeants Jeff Morales and Dolly Cruz fronted for the band.

On Saturday, tourists started to arrive at The Mansion's gates to catch a glimpse of President Macapagal-Arroyo and to listen to the 14-member PSG Combo.

"We were told that the [members of the First Family] always came out to greet the crowd, so we went here. I've never seen the President before. [On Friday], we even saw [First Gentleman Jose Miguel] Arroyo when he came out to buy *taho*," said a Metro Manila resident who only identified herself as Victoria. She said the band was a good idea.

"*Medyo gaganda ulit ang* image *niya pag ganyang lagi siyang may ibinibigay sa aming turista* (Her image will improve if she continues to give something like this to tourists like us)," Victoria said.

Between midnight and Sunday noon, no firecracker-related accidents or crimes were reported at Barangay Lualhati, where The Mansion is located, according to PO3 Luis Liban of police precinct 3.

Only eight cases of firecracker-related injuries were recorded in the city, after Ms Arroyo ordered an aggressive anti-firecracker campaign.

The number of injuries reported was a cheerful welcome to 2006 for Baguio, which has seen the tourists return after cases of the bacterial disease meningococcemia caused panic in the summer capital last year, said Purificacion Molintas, Cordillera director of the Department of Tourism.

Almost all hotels and inns recorded a 98-percent increase in holiday bookings this holiday season, Molintas said.

People should decide on 'no-el,' says De Castro

By Cynthia D. Balana

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO SAID yesterday the people should have the final say on whether or not to cancel the 2007 national elections to pave the way for the proposed shift from a presidential to a parliamentary form of government.

De Castro said he would not be an obstacle to a transition government, even if he were to be stripped of his position, as his political future was subordinate to the interests of the people.

The Vice President was reacting to the "deadline" given by former President Fidel Ramos to President Macapagal-Arroyo to make a public statement on whether she was for or against scrapping the 2007 elections as proposed by the Consultative Commission (ConCom). The deadline lapsed yesterday.

Ramos had hinted that he would abandon Ms Arroyo should she support the proposal to cancel the elections and extend the terms of elected government officials to 2010. He said his support for the President was conditioned on her willingness to cut short her term and working for a shift to a parliamentary system.

De Castro refused to comment on the ultimatum.

"President Arroyo and former President Ramos are both experienced politicians. They know where they are going and what's good for the country," he said.

He said the no-election proposal had yet to be submitted to Congress and eventually to the people.

"All we ask for is that our people be provided adequate information on this issue so they can make the right decision," he said, speaking in Filipino.

De Castro said he would not mind if he would not be given a significant position in the parliamentary government as long as the new set-up would result in better governance.

"It means nothing to me if they remove me or not," he said. "That involves only my own personal interest; the interest of the majority is more important. If that's what the people want, that's okay by me because it's the people who placed me in office," he said.

Meanwhile, De Castro said he supported efforts by the government-owned National Power Corp. to collect the P42 billion it said the Manila Electric Co. owed it.

De Castro made the statement to deny an accusation by the consumer group Samahan Laban sa Pang-a-Agrabyado ng Meralco (SLAM) that he was using his office to derail a planned government takeover of Meralco.

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US, Asia seen to power world economy in '06

PARIS—THE WORLD ECONOMY heads into the new year powered by vigorous growth in the United States and Asia after showing its mettle in a battle with high oil prices in the course of the past 12 months.

"The period of strong global growth looks set to continue," predicted economists at Credit Suisse/First Boston.

"The coming year looks like being the third in a row in which it runs above the sort of rate that we would have previously thought of as a trend. On that basis, it could be the strongest three-year period for 30 years," they said.

But for Global Insight chief economist Nariman Behravesh, "the big question out there in 2006 is about the nexus between the United States and Asia that has kept the global economy going."

"Will this nexus remain firm or will it be broken because of economic and political issues?"

Tough US demands

A toughening in US demands for Chinese currency reform, an increase in protectionist sentiment or, more seriously, a standoff over Taiwan, could all undermine relations between the two countries, he said.

Currency reform in China—Washington maintains the yuan is undervalued—is linked to another major risk for the world economy in 2006, namely, the ever-widening US current account and trade deficits.

These deficits were expected to cause a significant fall in the dollar in 2005—which never materialized—but they continue to constitute the biggest imbalance threatening economic stability, economists say.

Other clouds on the horizon include a possible slowdown in the galloping US housing market and an increase in the consumer saving rate, which remains below historic levels in many countries.

Inflation, along with oil, was the dominant theme for much of the second half of 2005, and it is likely to continue to figure prominently in 2006 as central banks remain on their guard.

The global economy's resistance to inflation in 2005 proved a revelation for many economists, revealing fundamental structural changes witnessed in the last two decades as well as benign shifts in attitudes.

Economic slowdown

As oil surged from around $43 per barrel at the start of the year to more than $70 in August, many had forecast an economic slowdown because consumers were expected to feel the pinch from higher prices.

Judging by past experience, inevitable inflationary effects would require a tightening of interest rates, acting as a further brake on economic growth.

In fact, world economic growth is forecast to be about 3.2 percent in 2005 and inflation, which spiked in September, has retreated in recent months in line with an easing of oil prices towards $60 per barrel.

"The most pleasant surprise and remarkable development in 2005 has been the resilience of the US and Asian economies to record high oil prices," said Behravesh.

"In the past, if we'd have had this type of rise in oil prices, we'd have had weaker growth and higher inflation."

Looking ahead, according to Bank of America economist Lorenzo Codogno, "the optimistic global outlook is based on improving fundamentals." *AFP*

Indons to invest ₱3B in RP

INDONESIA'S LIPPO GROUP, along with local partners, is investing some P3 billion ($56.5 million) in a Philippine bank, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced Saturday.

"The Lippo Group (is) investing P3 billion in Export Industry Bank," Ms Arroyo told reporters in Baguio City where she and her family were spending the holidays.

She said the agreement involving the Lippo Group "and a consortium of new local investors ... bodes well for the further strengthening of the financial sector."

She would not elaborate on the deal, however.

The Lippo Group is based in Jakarta, Indonesia, but has interests in Hong Kong and China. *AFP*

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Work with vets to get benefits, gov't execs urged

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A former congressman who is currently a director of the Philippine Veterans Bank has urged the government and World War II veterans' groups to work together to obtain full benefits for aging Filipino veterans in the US Congress.

Former Camarines Sur and Veterans party-list Rep. Eduardo Pilapil, speaking before the war veterans' descendants at the launching of the WWII Heritage Organization Inc. on Mt. Samat in Bataan last month, pointed out stark differences in the Philippine government and the Filipino veterans' positions on the US-based campaign to regain eligibility.

He said that while the top policy-making body of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines had come out only for full equity bills HR302 and S146 in the US Congress, some Philippine government officials were working for partial equity bills which would not give Filipino veterans the US benefits their American counterparts received.

He identified the government officials as belonging to the Department of National Defense, Philippine Veterans Affairs Office and the Philippine Embassy in Washington D.C.

He described the partial equity bills as "a prolongation of the injustice done to our World War II veterans and a perpetuation of the indignity heaped upon the Filipino people by the Rescission Act."

It will be recalled that in 1946, the US Congress passed the Rescission Act, a law that denied to and removed from most Filipino war veterans their eligibility to receive US veterans benefits, despite the fact that the Filipinos had fought under the US flag as American nationals from 1939 to 1945.

Since 1945, Pilapil, who was also tourism secretary and postmaster general, said the Philippine government had sought to remedy the injustice done to the Filipino veterans.

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Hitman trailed judge

By Luige A. del Puerto, Marlon Ramos and Nikko Dizon

A MAN IN A BLACK SHIRT AND jeans was snooping around the gym where Judge Henrick Gingoyon was working out before the judge was shot dead Saturday, the police said yesterday, quoting witnesses.

The man had overheard the gym's owner greet Gingoyon "Happy New Year" and therefore had the chance to confirm the identity of the judge who had authorized the government takeover of the mothballed Terminal 3 of Manila's international airport upon payment of P3 billion to Piatco, the consortium that built the terminal.

The man left the building before the judge did, according to the police.

Gingoyon, 53, of the Pasay City Regional Trial Court Branch 117, had just left the gym at Soldier's Hills Village in Barangay Molino, Bacoor, Cavite, and was walking home when one of two men on a motorcycle shot him in the back.

He was declared dead on arrival at a hospital in Imus town.

Senior Supt. Benhardi Mantele, chief of the Cavite Police, said the man the police were looking for was about 28 to 30 years old, between 5'8 to 5'9 tall, and of medium build.

Investigators were working on this information in an effort to identity the man who shot dead the controversial judge.

"We're not saying this man is already the suspect. But he was making inquiries about the gym, such as (how to become) a member," Mantele said "This is at least (a) lead."

Director General Arturo Lomibao has directed the Southern Luzon Police to create a task force to investigate the murder.

Judge's slay shocks . . .

From page A1

At the height of militant unionism in Metro Cebu between 1984 and 1985, he joined protesting workers, lugging a portable typewriter to prepare court pleadings right on the picket line to prevent the police and military from dispersing the striking workers.

After the 1986 People Power Revolution, Gingoyon relocated to Metro Manila when he was named a state prosecutor. He joined the judiciary in the late 1990s.

The fourth of eight siblings, Gingoyon regularly came home to Cebu to visit his mother and the grave of his father, Martin, who died two years ago. All of Gingoyon's siblings are in Cebu, except for a sister who lives in the United States.

He last visited the city on All Saints' Day, an occasion for the Gingoyon family to hold its annual reunion, according to Elain, daughter of Gingoyon's oldest brother, Jerome.

Elain said the judge, his wife Maribeth and their five children—four girls and one boy aged 10 to 28—were supposed to be here on Jan. 15 for the culmination of the Sinulog Festival, held in honor of Cebu's patron saint, the Señor Sto. Niño.

"We were all shocked and could not believe what happened," Elain said.

Jerome said he was still bewildered by his brother's brutal death. "We are still in a state of grief, so the family cannot issue any statement," he said when reached Saturday.

The INQUIRER sent a text message yesterday to Jerome asking for a statement from the family but it was his son, Jerade, who responded by saying that they could not issue any statement as his uncle's siblings were still meeting at the family home on Urgello Street.

The siblings have to inform their 80-year-old mother, Conchita, about Henrick's death.

Jerade said the Gingoyon siblings were also discussing when to bring Henrick's body home to Cebu.

Elain and Jerade said their uncle was a very kind and good person who, despite his stature, had never changed and had maintained a simple lifestyle.

"He was not a corrupt judge. In fact, he usually made decisions based on what was right, even if it put his life at risk," Elain said.

With a report from Edra L. Benedicto, PDI Visayas Bureau

GIs' case perils RP-US ties

From page A1

Rosales pointed out that the VFA was a mere executive agreement because the US Senate had yet to ratify it.

Six US servicemen originally underwent preliminary investigation before the Olongapo City prosecutor's office on allegations that they raped a Filipino woman inside a van at the Subic Bay Freeport, a former US naval base.

Four of them, along with the Filipino van driver Timoteo Soriano Jr., were formally charged on Tuesday, namely, Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier and Lance Corporals Dominic Duplantis, Daniel Smith and Keith Silkwood. The complaints against Lance Corporals Corey Burris and Albert Lara were dismissed.

Lawmakers have raised a howl over the detailing of the accused at the Joint US Military Assistance Group (Jusmag), an office within the US Embassy compound on Roxas Boulevard in Manila.

Lenient treatment

Rosales and Davao del Sur Rep. Douglas Cagas said Friday the lenient treatment of the accused emphasized the need for the Philippine government to insist that it take custody of them.

For his part, House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said the accused should be detained. "They should be [kept] in a detention facility very much like Filipinos who are accused of common crimes in the United States," Escudero said.

"Whatever special status they have as US servicemen, they lost it when they committed a crime punishable by our laws," he said.

Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, a member of the bicameral committee on the VFA, also wants the government to exercise its sovereignty to gain custody of the four Marines.

Prosecutors earlier demanded custody of the Americans, but Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes, executive director of the Presidential Commission on the VFA, said the VFA allowed the US government to take custody of the accused until the case was decided.

Judicial cognizance

Gonzalez disagreed with the view of Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño that the Olongapo court was free to order the arrest of the accused because the judiciary was a separate branch of government.

Zuño earlier said the DOJ would not pursue the custody issue because it was bound by the VFA being part of the executive department.

Gonzalez said the judges should also take "judicial cognizance" of the VFA.

"The courts, under our rules [of court], must take judicial knowledge or judicial cognizance of laws and treaties. So, what happens there is that when the court is at the stage of issuing a warrant, I'm sure it will have to consider that because the court will look funny ... if it does not take judicial cognizance of [the treaty]," he said.

No debate on custody

The justice secretary said the VFA should be given due recognition because the Senate had deliberated on the agreement.

"If the court will force the issue, it's possible that the Americans will raise that with the Supreme Court."

Zuño also earlier raised the danger of the Americans bringing the matter to the high court, saying it would affect the VFA provision, which states that the judicial process involving US servicemen charged with crimes here must be completed in a year's time.

The one-year period runs from the time of arraignment to the sentencing. It also includes the appeal to the high courts, according to Gonzalez.

Thus, Gonzalez said, the issue of custody should no longer be debated.

"For me, we should no longer debate on that because if they bring the question of custody before the Supreme Court, then the issue will drag on," he said.

Okinawa case

Asked about the case in Okinawa where the United States agreed to turn over custody of its soldiers who were accused of rape to the Japanese government, Gonzalez said it was another story.

He said the United States could not be faulted for availing itself of the VFA provision allowing it to keep custody of its men accused of a crime.

"To me, ideally, we should take custody, but I think we should not also unilaterally break that treaty. If we think that the treaty is of paramount importance to us, then we should negotiate with the Americans [so] that they will return custody to us," the justice secretary said.

Convict in Ninoy murder knifed dead

From page A1

"He was just trying to stop Ocenar who was too drunk and had gone wild. But Ocenar was quick, and he stabbed him [Estelo] in his right side, near his chest," said a prison insider who asked not to be identified for security reasons.

Estelo was a member of the Aviation Security Command SWAT team that arrested Aquino as he returned from exile on Aug. 21, 1983. The trial established that he and his fellow Avsecom soldiers killed Aquino and Galman, who had been set up as the fall guy. Estelo was also found to have been in the SWAT van that brought Aquino's body to Fort Bonifacio after the killing.

Drinking all day

The source said Ocenar had been drinking all day, upset that his wife had refused to stay with him inside the prison, only agreeing to meet him at the compound's gate.

Inmates had been granted a holiday privilege, allowing their families and loved ones an overnight stay at the prison compound on Dec. 31 and Jan. 1.

Ocenar reportedly threw a tantrum between 7:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. in the passageway between the compound's tennis court and the multi-purpose covered court which was being readied for the New Year's Eve festivities for the inmates.

"He was firing his pistol, though no bullets were coming out. The other inmates were afraid of him because he was too strong. When [Estelo] approached him, Ocenar immediately stabbed him," the source said.

Ocenar, who is called *kalawit* (The Hook) for his deadly skill with a knife, killed Estelo with one fatal stroke, said the prison insider.

The source added that Ocenar, the dreaded former *bosyo*, or commander, of the Batang City Jail prison gang, came after the prison guards as they carried the bloodied Estelo to the NBP Hospital.

"That's when a prison guard fired at Ocenar to disable him. He sustained a gunshot wound in his left leg," said the source.

Ocenar, who is said to have been in and out of prison on murder and arson convictions, was also taken to the hospital.

NBP authorities immediately ordered a prison lock-down, canceling the New Year's Eve program and the Jan. 1 overnight privilege for inmates' families.

Silent type

Fr. Robert Olaguer, who had befriended the the Aquino-Galman convicts, said Estelo was a kind of overseer of the covered court area so that he felt obliged to intervene whenever there was a commotion in the jail.

"He did not have any enemies, he was the silent type," said Olaguer.

Estelo's body was brought to the Zenaida Lim de Mesa Memorial Chapel in Muntinlupa, along with the death certificate and an autopsy request letter to the Philippine National Police.

But a relative of Estelo's called the funeral home yesterday asking to defer the autopsy as the family intended to take the body to Cavite, where the family lives.

The letter, signed by NBP Supt. Juanito Leopando, said Estelo was killed in a "stabbing/shooting incident." The death certificate indicated that the cause of death was "undetermined."

The NBP's autopsy request letter also indicated that Estelo, prisoner number 40218, died at the age of 48. A 2003 INQUIRER report, however, placed Estelo's age at 51.

While the NBP has yet to release an official report on the incident, the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption advocacy group noted the lax security at the prison, noting how an inmate managed to sneak in a knife and a firearm.

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ConCom's Cha-cha . . .

From page A1

saviors of this nation should be examined critically, for no side in the current crisis can claim exclusive possession of political virtue. I can't bring myself to share the conviction that all the evils of Philippine politics are embodied in one single person or that one individual, group or sector is uniquely imbued with the virtue of political probity.

In her New Year's Eve message to the nation, the President optimistically predicted that the country was ready to break out to a strong start.

"We took the bitter pill of reform with fortitude and the payoff has been solid and strong, a world more confident in the Philippines, investors taking a hard look at our potential, a people raring for the gold medal in every enterprise and effort," she said.

She urged Filipinos to "break away" from the past and "move on".

Ms Arroyo's optimism about a vibrant economy was based on evidence no more solid than the large inflow of remittances from overseas Filipino workers, for which her government cannot claim credit.

"The strength of the peso is a sign that in the New Year, a beautiful tomorrow is awaiting us," she said. The renewed strength of the peso "continues to be a rallying point for the economic future of the country."

Arguably, the Arroyo administration underwent its worst ordeal in 2005, rocked by waves of crises beginning in June which were triggered by the disclosure of wiretapped conversations between the President and an election commissioner, and seized upon by her enemies as evidence of the alleged rigging of the 2004 elections, thus spurring intensified demands from the streets for her resignation.

Malignant continuity

Although the President has survived the worst of the crisis, she enters the New Year limping and crippled. She has sought to refocus the nation's energy and attention on the economy, hoping that the legitimacy issue that hounded her in 2005 would be forgotten.

But she overlooks the fact that the legitimacy issue has a malignant continuity and has taken a life of its own.

This issue is poised to be revived with a vengeance in 2006, although there may not be another crisis as explosive as the wiretap disclosure in June and the July 8 Cabinet resignations that sent her government to the brink of collapse.

The President has sabotaged the effort at refocusing the nation's attention on the economy by politicizing the agenda in the closing days of 2005. In the dying hours of the old year, the Consultative Commission on constitutional change handed her a political dynamite wired with fuses that can ignite an explosion in 2006.

2 incendiary elements

The draft Constitution that the commission has submitted contains two incendiary elements in its transitory provisions in preparation for the shift to the proposed parliamentary system in 2010. The first provides for the cancellation of the 2007 elections for half of the Senate, members of the House of Representatives and of local officials, and the extension of their terms up to 2010.

The second upholds her six-year elective term, allowing her to retain her powers as President with supervision over the prime minister of an interim parliament until general elections in 2010.

The President has indicated she would push the Consultative Commission's recommendations as a priority item in the congressional agenda for the new year, thereby ensuring that the agenda will be politicized and that political fireworks will erupt in the new year.

Power struggle

The first encounter will be the ignition of a power struggle with the Senate, which is fighting for its life as it faces extinction from the administration-backed proposal to convene the two chambers of Congress into a constituent assembly to propose amendments to the 1987 Constitution.

In this new arena of conflict, the crisis of 2005 could be re-ignited, with incendiary intensity. In this conflagration, the President's hopes and design to remain in power through the Charter change stratagem could go up in smoke.

I can only see more trouble ahead and if this takes place, we can say goodbye to economic recovery.

‘Pinoy charm is top tourist attraction’

By Jerome Aning

IT NOT THE PLACE BUT THE PEOPLE.

The warmth and hospitality of the Filipinos rather than the country’s physical attractions were the main draw for foreign tourists who came to the Philippines, according to Tourism Secretary Joseph “Ace” Durano.

“A big chunk of the country’s annual inbound tourists were repeat visitors and they returned to the Philippines to savor again their overall positive experience. Number one in their list was their memorable encounter with the people,” Durano said in an interview.

While official tourism figures were still being accumulated, the secretary predicted that for 2005, foreign tourist arrivals would have exceeded 2004’s record of 2.5 million visitors.

Foreigners in 2005 were projected to have spent about $2.5 billion at local hotels, restaurants, malls, other tourist facilities and for transportation, Durano said.

Tourism also generated more than 300,000 new jobs in 2005, on top of the 2 million workers already in the industry, he said.

Durano said that as the economy benefits from tourism in the form of profits and jobs, more Filipinos would become conscious of the importance of the “culture of tourism.”

The term was coined by former tourism secretary now Sen. Richard Gordon, who had said that acts ranging from refraining from littering on the streets to ensuring that tourists were safe and comfortable translated to a better image of the Philippines abroad.

Durano said that this year, the Department of Tourism would be unveiling new marketing plans and beefing up promotional campaigns to make its operations even more sweeping and effective.

Aside from improving its marketing drive in China, the DOT is also targeting India, Russia and Australia for its “market specific” approach in promoting Philippine tourism, he said.

Rising tourist arrivals should also mean a need for more accommodations for them, Durano said, as he called for an increase in the country’s hotel capacity.

The secretary said total room capacity was only around 3 million.

In 2005, the government was able to raise about $2 billion in investments, mostly from abroad, to construct and expand tourist accommodations and facilities in the country.

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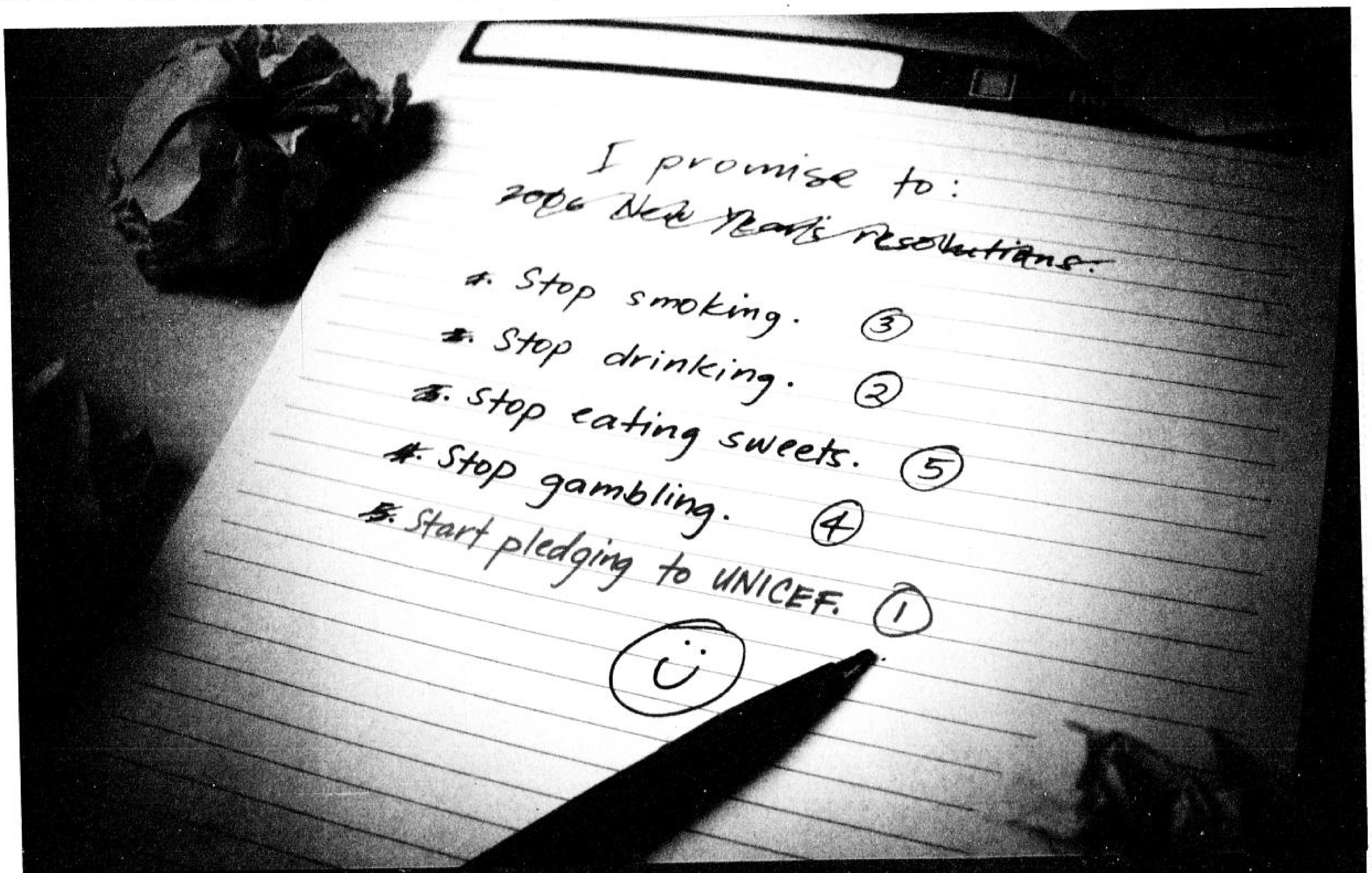

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Senate kept secret votes rejecting US bases

From page A1

letters from President Corazon Aquino, copies of the draft treaty, communications between foreign affairs officials and the US Embassy—were being kept under tight guard in Salonga's office.

But their contents dribbled slowly out of other senators' mouths, which were much easier to pry open than Salonga's cabinets.

The trick was to approach the senators without paper, pen or tape recorder in hand. This was to avoid either of two things happening—the senators putting on their best behavior and talking guardedly or clamming up altogether to avoid spilling the beans on a treaty described as so one-sided in the United States' favor that it might have been crafted by people who wanted the Senate to trash the document.

To do this, a reporter needed sharp ears, a long memory and sound judgment on whether a senator's statement was fact, propaganda or gibberish.

Another rich lode of information were members of the senators' staffs who were lured into conversations inside elevators, the not-so-exclusive senators' lounge and after-office watering holes.

The deliberations on the treaty were attended with so much legal jargon that covering them became quite boring, at least for some of the journalists.

Even before the treaty was officially transmitted to the Senate for ratification, reporters already knew which senators were likely to vote to reject or ratify it, although quite a few surprises were sprung at the end.

Firm editorial stand

"Emotions were running very high at the time," says Arnold Clavio, who was then covering the Senate for dzBB radio.

The treaty drew out strong reactions, not only from the senators who were deciding its fate, but also from the reporters who were chronicling how the Senate would make its historic decision.

Emotions were so high that Sen. Leticia Ramos Shahani, who chaired the committee on foreign relations that was vetting the treaty before it could be brought to the floor for debate, complained of what she perceived to be the INQUIRER's anti-bases bias.

(The INQUIRER had by then made a rare editorial stand—the US military bases must go. The issue became so contentious even within the INQUIRER that the newspaper's president at the time, Enrique Belo, a gentleman of the old school, resigned because he could not reconcile his pro-bases position with the paper's anti-bases stance.)

At the press working area of the old Senate building that is now a museum, reporters were monitoring the live television coverage of the debates.

In the same way that it divided the Senate, the bases treaty issue had driven a wedge among reporters who were on opposite sides of the issue.

As the late Sen. Neptali Gonzales was fiercely defending the treaty on the Senate floor as one so valuable that its defeat could lead to economic doom for the country, one reporter got so carried away that he began shouting invectives. Another reporter shouted back at him in defense of Gonzales.

Erap's favorite

But though tensions were running high, there was also plenty of comic relief. Butch Fernandez, who was then covering the Senate for the defunct Daily Globe, recalls how the then Sen. Joseph Estrada would step into the well-lighted session hall in dark glasses to conceal his favorite occupation—sleeping.

At one point, Estrada, a former movie star whose anti-bases position did much to popularize the cause, approached a TV cameraman and asked him not to focus his camera on him.

"Then he would return to his seat, put his sunglasses back on and sleep," Fernandez recalls.

Clavio, who now hosts the popular morning show "Unang Hirit" on GMA 7, recalls how he could not forget the floor debate between Senators Ernesto Herrera and Agapito "Butz" Aquino.

Herrera was making a pitch for the retention of the bases, citing a US promise of assistance in labor training if the Senate ratified the treaty.

Ethnic 'insult'

Herrera, a Boholano who speaks with a thick Visayan accent, was saying that he was convinced of the benefits the country would derive from the treaty, including the promised dollars that would go "letter" into labor training.

He of course meant "later."

The anti-bases Butz Aquino, who just could not let pass an opportunity for an ethnic insult, stood up and asked Herrera if he meant "letter" or later."

The exchange did not make it to the papers, but it went into the record as one of the lowest points of the Senate treaty deliberations.

The debates were replete with images that would be etched forever in the minds of those who covered the whole issue.

Cory rebuffed

To Clavio, one of the most memorable sights was that of President Corazon Aquino in a yellow raincoat marching in the rain from Malacañang to the Senate to lobby for the treaty's ratification. She would be rebuffed by Butz Aquino, the brother of her husband, the martyred hero Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

While his eloquence and flair for public speaking paled in comparison with that of his illustrious brother, Butz would utter what to Clavio was one of the most stirring words on the treaty and perhaps the only quotable statement in his entire public life: "I love my country more than I love my President."

The courageous woman who led the movement to oust the dictator Ferdinand Marcos stood in the Senate, drenched from the rain, asking to let the American military presence remain in the Philippines, and was rejected. Photographers fired away.

One of the most moving images was that of the revered nationalist and ex-senator, the late Jose W. Diokno, who sat in his wheelchair in the gallery watching as senators cast and explained their votes.

When it became clear that the treaty would be defeated, Diokno, already weak from cancer, tried to rise from his wheelchair as he raised a clenched fist, a gesture he had made countless times in the past in many anti-Marcos rallies.

He would die a few days after the treaty was rejected.

The debates also offered many opportunities for grandstanding and gimmickry as some anti-bases senators wanted their act to be recorded in history in types larger than they deserved.

Timing, entertainment

A proven master of timing, Sen. Ernesto Maceda was remembered by journalists not so much for what he said but for the drama he tried to pull off. He ended his speech at exactly 3 p.m. with the words: "*Consumatum est* (It is done)." The pompous reference to Christ's dying words was intentional, and some journalists refused to pick it up.

The entertainment was mainly provided by Estrada who, in the beginning, was quite content to watch from the sidelines as reporters interviewed his more knowledgeable colleagues. But the ex-movie star could not stand being ignored for long. One day he approached the group of reporters and asked: *"Ako, hindi niyo ba i-interbyuhin* (Aren't you going to interview me, too)."

The former actor not only provided a light and amusing side to the treaty deliberations, he literally brought the bases debate to the level of entertainment.

While the whole issue was roiling the country, Estrada produced an anti-bases film "Sa Kuko ng Agila" in which he also starred. He succeeded in getting his Senate colleague, Sen. Nikki Coseteng, to be his leading lady. Arguably, the most memorable thing about the movie was the scene that showed Estrada kissing a very stiff Coseteng.

Reporters tried every trick in the book to squeeze information from the senators, especially when they were holding meetings behind closed doors. They tried smuggling tape recorders through the waiters, held their ears to the walls and tried to loosen the tongues of Senate staffers with bottles of beer.

But the most important information that landed in the front pages of the INQUIRER would come straight from the horses' mouths. Some senators just could not resist the temptation of being quoted in the papers.

Nature helped

In the end, even nature helped the opponents of the US bases. At the height of the bases debate, Mt. Pinatubo erupted and blanketed Clark Air Base with thick ash fall that make the facilities all but useless to the US Air Force. The Americans abandoned Clark and retreated to Subic, as if to make their last stand there.

When the day came for the senators to vote, Sen. Wigberto Tañada called on anti-bases advocates to wear green. On the Senate floor, as rejection became clearer with each vote cast, reporters could be seen among those wearing green.

The partying began in the streets and it would be a long, long night.

Where loggers go . . .

From page A1

Brazilian earthworm is the tell-tale sign that an area has been logged, whether the loggers, the government or even the communities deny the activity, according to biologist Dante Flores.

"If we see a Brazilian worm, you know that an area has been logged ... Anywhere you go, the Brazilian earthworm is there; it is perhaps the only species you can find from Babuyan (island) to Sulu," said Flores, an earthworm expert.

Brazilian worms, named so because of their origin, are pink with yellow humps.

Flores, who has spent the past three years studying earthworms in the Philippines, said the Brazilian earthworms, which usually thrive in the lowlands, are transferred to upland forests only by human activity.

The Brazilian earthworms usually come with the tree species used for replanting after a forest has been logged over. The trees are often taken from the lowlands, where the Brazilian earthworms are found.

"They can tolerate any kinds of habitat. They are transferred by human activity and are highly invasive," Flores said.

He cited the existence of Brazilian earthworms in a denuded forest in Hinubaan, Negros Occidental. The forest, which is 98 percent logged over, has a huge population of Brazilian earthworms.

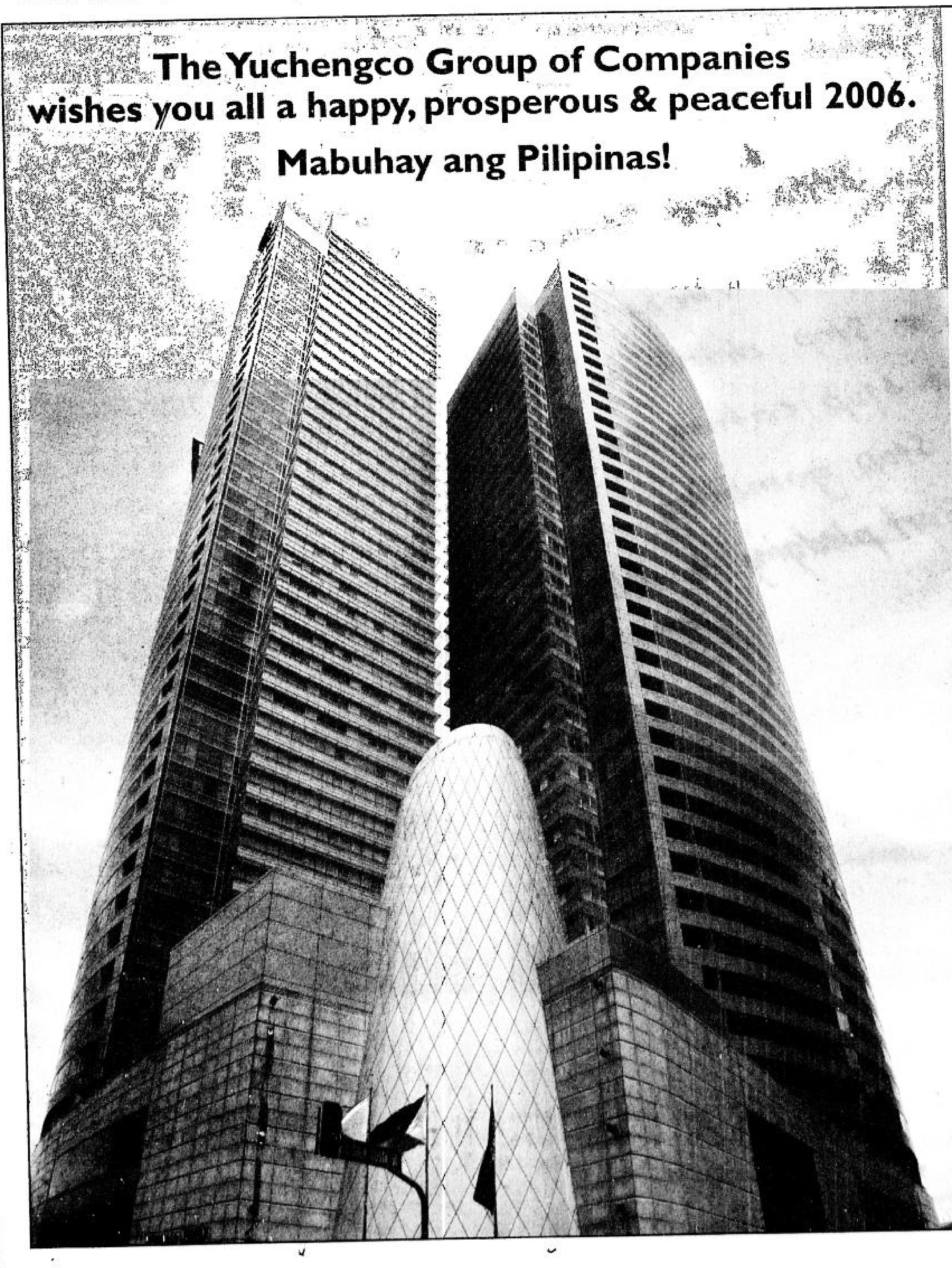
Unlike other species, the Brazilian earthworms' excretion becomes compact, which blocks the entry of water into the soil instead of facilitating it and helping reduce floods.

"If you want to stop flash flooding, you really need [other] earthworms because they bore holes, which make it easier for the rain to go straight to the roots of the trees," Flores said.

An earthworm expedition conducted by Samuel James, an expert on earthworm taxonomy at the Kansas University Biodiversity Research Center, and Flores revealed that the Philippines could have the highest diversity of earthworms in the world.

The Philippines has a "ridiculously high endemism and diversity of earthworms," Flores quoted James as saying based on discoveries during their exploration last month.

There are at least 200 earthworm species in the forests of Luzon and on Mt. Malindanag and the municipality of Kitanglad in Mindanao. The Visayas could easily reveal another 200 "undescribed" species, Flores said.



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Keep send-off groups small, travelers told

By Nikko Dizon

YOU DON'T NEED THE WHOLE BARANGAY to see you off at the airport.

Girding for the exodus of *balikbayans* and overseas Filipino workers who spent the holidays in the country, the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) Thursday issued tips on how to avoid predeparture hassles.

While Filipinos are traditionally close-knit, a Miaa official said large sendoff parties comprised of family members and friends unnecessarily add to the congestion at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

"Having one or two relatives or friends bring you to the airport and see you off is actually enough," Supt. Rizalino Roxas, chief of operations at the Naia Airport Security Center, said in an interview.

Congestion also adds to the security nightmare at the Naia, where tight security measures are being implemented in light of the global terrorism threat.

Roxas said an estimated 11,000 passengers, mostly *balikbayans* and OFWs, were expected to leave the country via the Naia beginning Jan. 2.

To expedite predeparture procedures, Roxas advised passengers to place their personal belongings that have metal components, like belts and jewelry, in their hand-carry luggage.

"By doing that, passengers won't have to remove their belts or jewelry before going through the X-ray machine and then put them on again while in line, causing long queues at the security checks," Roxas said.

He said that by placing their valuables in their hand-carry bags, passengers also minimized the risk of losing their property when these are placed on a tray and run through the X-ray machine.

Among other tips Roxas gave departing passengers were:

- Confirm your return flight bookings.
- Be at the airport at least four hours before your flight's scheduled departure time. OFWs should first proceed to the Naia OFW Lounge for validation of their predeparture documents before checking in.
- Fill out the immigration embarkation form, which is usually given out together with the airline ticket, before proceeding to the immigration area; filling out the form at the immigration counter can cause delay.
- Have P550 or $10 ready for the terminal fee.
- Stay within the airport premises after checking in.

Roxas reiterated that bullets used as amulets and key chains were prohibited in the airport and on aircraft.

Don't go to Kuwait on tourist visas, DFA warns OFWs

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS has issued a warning to Kuwait-bound Filipinos not to use tourist visas to try and find employment in that country.

"The Department of Foreign Affairs advises all overseas Filipino workers bound for Kuwait to possess the proper work permits and residence visas and not tourist visas in order to avoid problems with immigration authorities in that Middle East country," said the DFA in a statement, noting that Kuwaiti immigration was "very strict" about issuing employment documents.

The travel advisory was issued on the recommendation of Charge d' Affaires Ricardo Endaya of the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait.

Endaya said foreign workers with expired tourist visas, several Filipinos among them, were being required to pay a penalty of KD2 (Kuwaiti dinar) a day, which is equivalent to P370.

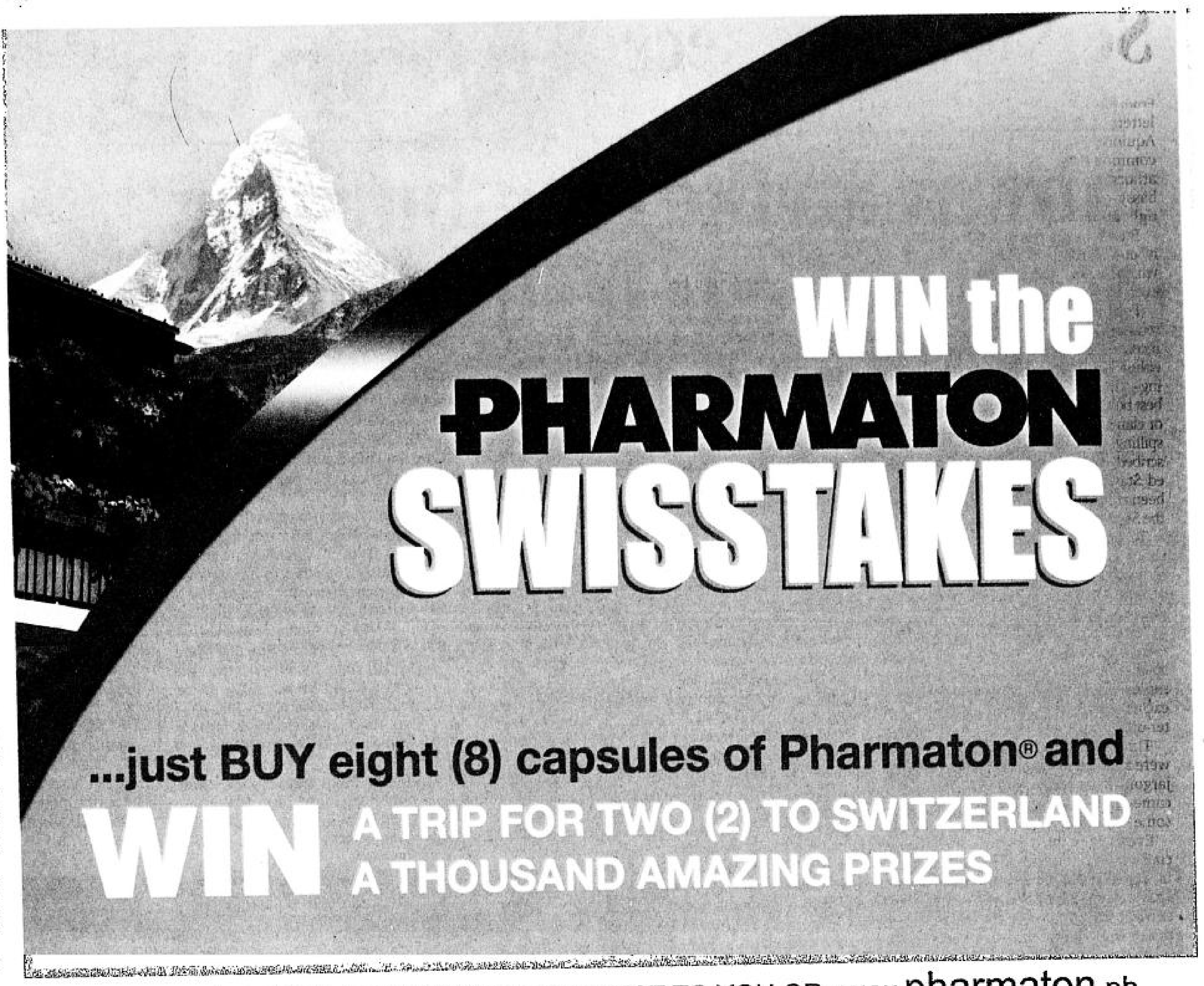
Some of the OFWs are now staying at the Philippine Embassy's welfare center.

OFWs going to Kuwait on tourist visas "are likely to be exploited by unscrupulous employers and may eventually find themselves stranded with their wages unpaid," Endaya said.

He said it was not easy to find good jobs in Kuwait unless a foreign worker had a visa–18.

"Majority of Filipino workers in Kuwait have only a visa-20, which is for domestic workers and is not transferable unless agreed upon by the employer," Endaya said.

He said those holding visa-20s cannot work in hotels, restaurants or offices. *Nikko Dizon*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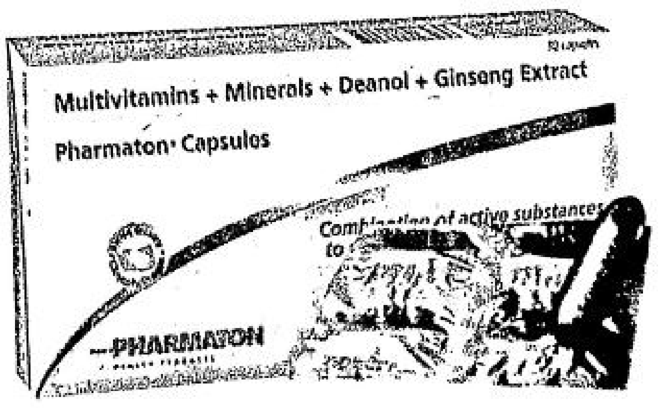
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Subway strike, car-burning mar New Year festivities

NEW YORK—HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF New Year's revelers rang in 2006 from Times Square as the famous crystal ball dropped on the final seconds of the weary and battered old year.

"Now bring on peace and happiness!" exclaimed Tarra Meadders, visiting from Arlington, Texas, as the crowd burst into cheers at the stroke of midnight.

Londoners ignored a subway strike to welcome the New Year. Some Japanese climbed a snow-capped peak to see the first sunrise of 2006. GIs in Iraq got a year-end "American Idol" treat.

New Year's celebrations like these spread throughout the world Saturday and early Sunday and were generally jubilant, a contrast with last year when the devastation of the Indian Ocean tsunami led many countries and individuals to cancel festivities.

In parts of Asia, the threat of terrorism loomed large, and a bombing at a market in Indonesia killed eight people and wounded 45.

As confetti rained down and the numbers 2006 lit up over Times Square, the massive crowd stretching more than 10 blocks up Broadway and the surrounding streets sang "Auld Lang Syne" as one voice.

In Boston, First Night celebration organizers estimated more than 1 million people were in the city to celebrate the new year.

The theme in Boston was Mardi Gras, in honor of hurricane-ravaged New Orleans. The "Spirit of New Orleans" parade featured carnival masks, and jazz bands joined in.

New Orleans itself started the New Year's celebration with a traditionally festive jazz funeral procession in memory of its hurricane victims. Despite the devastation, the city decided to welcome 2006 with concerts and a lowering of a giant gumbo pot to mark the start of the new year.

Revelers were urged not to light fireworks out of fear that they would ignite dead vegetation and debris still piled throughout the city or the blue plastic tarps draped over thousands of damaged roofs.

Flooding from storms in the West forced Reno, Nevada, to move its New Year's Eve fireworks back a day to Monday, but the mayor still promised to lead a New Year's Eve countdown.

Las Vegas, meanwhile, kept in character—everything to excess—with the Strip's drunken revelry, a mass simultaneous New Year's Eve toast, complete with 14,000 plastic cups and some 200 cases of Chardonnay, and an annual blowout billed as the largest New Year's Eve party outside New York.

In France, youths burned hundreds of cars in a traditional year-end form of vandalism, but the country appeared to have avoided a massive resurgence of the rioting that broke out this fall.

By 4 a.m. Sunday, police counted 343 vehicles burned—just slightly more than the comparable figure from last year, 323, police said. They also arrested 266 people, but it wasn't clear if the arrests were linked to the vandalism.

Hundreds of American soldiers in Iraq got a special show from "American Idol" singer Diana DeGarmo and other entertainers at Camp Victory in Baghdad. *AP*

British woman marries dolphin

PATAY NA
PATAY NAMAN
ITO SA AKIN!

JERUSALEM—SHARON TENDLER met Cindy 15 years ago. She said it was love at first sight. This week she finally took the plunge and proposed. The lucky "guy" plunged right back.

In a modest ceremony at Dolphin Reef in the southern Israeli port of Eilat, Tendler, a 41-year-old British citizen, apparently became the world's first person to "marry" a dolphin.

Dressed in a white dress, a veil and pink flowers in her hair, Tendler got down on one knee on the dock and gave Cindy a kiss. And a piece of herring.

"It's not a perverted thing. I do love this dolphin. He's the love of my life," she said Saturday, upon her return to London.

Tendler, who said she imports clothes and promotes rock bands in England, has visited Israel several times a year since first meeting the dolphin.

When asked in the past if she had a boyfriend, she would always reply, "No. I'm going to end up with Cindy." On Wednesday, she made it official, sort of. While she acknowledged the "wedding" had no legal bearing she did say it reflected her deep feelings toward the bottlenosed, 35-year-old object of her affection.

"It's not a bad thing. It just something that we did because I love him, but not in the way that you love a man. It's just a pure love that I have for this animal," she said. *AP*

Churchill willing to let Gandhi starve to death, say archives

LONDON—WINSTON CHURCHILL, Britain's World War II prime minister, was prepared to let Indian independence leader Mahatma Gandhi starve to death if he went on hunger strike while interned during the war, archives released in London showed Sunday.

He thought Gandhi should be dealt with like any other detainee if he refused food.

Churchill's tough line was recorded during war Cabinet meetings, which also showed Britain's confusion over how to handle the charismatic Indian leader's stance of peaceful opposition.

The notes record Churchill as saying Gandhi should stay in detention and "let him do as he likes."

Deputy Cabinet Secretary Sir Norman Brook's notes reveal ministers wondered whether Gandhi as a martyr would lead to a mass uprising in India—and embarrassment for Britain.

However, they did not want to free Gandhi and allow him to campaign against the war and British rule while the crown colony was under the threat of Japanese invasion.

Gandhi was held for two years at the Aga Khan's Palace in Pune, western India, from August 1942 after slamming India's involvement in the war and calling for civil disobedience.

India's viceroy, Lord (Victor) Linlithgow, sent ministers a telegram stating he was "strongly in favor of letting (Gandhi) starve to death" if he went on hunger strike.

However, officials in London worried that the backlash would be too powerful.

Lord (Edward) Halifax, the ambassador to the United States and a former viceroy of India and foreign secretary, told Cabinet the day after Gandhi's Aug. 9 arrest in Bombay: "Whatever the disadvantages of letting him out, his death in detention would be worse."

Ministers decided in January 1943 that although they could not be seen to cave in to a hunger strike, they would free him on compassionate grounds were he likely to die.

Sir Stafford Cripps, minister for aircraft production—who the previous year had failed to reach an agreement with Gandhi that would secure Indian loyalty to the war effort—said: "He is such a semi-religious figure that his death in our hands would be a great blow and embarrassment to us."

However, Churchill, annoyed by the prospect of Gandhi claiming a moral victory, said: "I wd (would) keep him there and let him do as he likes," according to the notes.

"But if you are going to let him out because he strikes, then let him out now." *AFP*

HUNDREDS of thousands of revelers watch as the year 2006 is brought in with fireworks in New York's Times Square, Jan. 1. AP

N. Korean troops told to become 'human bullets' against US attacks

SEOUL—STALINIST NORTH KOREA, in a New Year message on Sunday, urged its soldiers to become "human bullets and bombs" against possible US attacks and vowed to boost farming to feed its people amid international fears of famine.

The nation also vowed to bolster unity with South Korea in an editorial message carried jointly by three newspapers representing the ruling communist party, military and youth guard.

"Whatever the situation is, the principled stand of our party and state to give top priority to the military remains unchanged," read the message, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

It urged North Korea's 1.1 million troops to become "human bullets and bombs" defending the state led by Kim Jong-il, one of the world's most isolated countries, from possible US attacks.

The North also called on South Koreans to join its "struggle to resolutely foil the US attempt to launch another war" on the Korean peninsula.

"We must remove the root cause of war completely from this land by launching a nationwide campaign for driving out the US troops," the message said.

North Korea has been locked in a standoff for years with the United States over its development of nuclear weapons. It has stepped up its anti-US rhetoric in recent weeks following US criticism of its human rights record.

The editorial, however, avoided touching on the stalemated nuclear disarmament negotiations which involve the United States, both Koreas, China, Russia and Japan. *AFP*

Treason trial for Syria's ex-VP urged

DAMASCUS—SYRIA'S PARLIAMENT called Saturday for the country's former vice president to face treason charges after he publicly accused President Bashar al-Assad of threatening Rafiq Hariri just months before Lebanese ex-premier's murder.

"We appeal to Justice Minister Mohammed Ghafri to bring Abdel Halim Khaddam before justice for high treason and to take the necessary measures," said speaker Mahmud al-Abrash.

The parliament passed the motion unanimously calling for a trial during a regular session in which several lawmakers accused Khaddam of "treason" and "corruption" for his remarks, which dealt a new blow to Assad's regime.

"I demand, in my own name and the name of the people, that Khaddam is judged because he has attacked the dignity of Syria and humiliated millions of Syrians," said MP Umeima Khudur.

Khaddam, long the architect of Syria's military and political domination of neighboring Lebanon, made his explosive claims in an interview with Dubai-based Al-Arabiya television.

"I will destroy anyone who tries to hinder our decisions," Khaddam quoted Assad as telling Hariri during a meeting in Damascus. *AFP*

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	Lettermen concert, Araneta Coliseum
January 29	Sunday Mass, SBC Chapel
	Campus tour
	Sto. Nino procession
	Jam session, Bykes Cafe, Makati
January 30/31	Beach outing, Montemar, Bataan
January 31	Farewell dinner, Makati

Contact persons

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Redeamus et Reddamus
Let us come back and give back

Gunmen blow up UN workers' club in Gaza Strip

GAZA—MASKED GUNMEN STORMED INTO a club for United Nations workers in Gaza City on Sunday and blew up the drinking hall in a new sign of spiralling unrest ahead of a Palestinian election.

It was the first such attack in Gaza on a UN target and came against a backdrop of growing unease among foreigners. Just over one day earlier, a group freed three British hostages that had been seized to demand foreign pressure on Israel.

The bombing was another big blow for President Mahmoud Abbas, just hours after he had vowed to impose order ahead of a Jan. 25 election and as militants announced the expiry of a de facto truce with Israel that they had followed at his behest.

Gunmen burst into the UN club, one of the few places that alcohol is served in conservative Muslim Gaza. It had been closed for the day. The attackers tied up the security guard and struck him with gun butts.

Then they set explosives in front of the bar, unrolled a detonator cable and blew up the charges, ripping up the roof and shattering the windows.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

The United Nations is generally viewed with sympathy in Gaza.

Its agency supporting Palestinian refugees and their descendants, more than half of Gaza's 1.4 million population, is the second biggest employer after the Palestinian Authority. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Russia cuts off gas to Ukraine

MOSCOW—Russia began cutting off gas to Ukraine in a dispute that could hit deliveries to a wintry Europe on the very day that Moscow debuted as chairman of the Group of Eight industrialized nations. Russian Gazprom said it had begun reducing pressure in the pipeline supplying Ukraine on Sunday after Kiev refused to pay the increased amount Moscow was demanding for its gas and last-ditch efforts failed to resolve the price row. "In this situation, which is the fault of the Ukrainian side, we have been forced to start reducing pressure in the pipeline to Ukraine," Gazprom spokesperson Sergei Kupriyanov told a news briefing. Gazprom supplies 25 percent of western Europe's gas—most of it via Ukraine. Moscow is seeking a rise in the price of gas it sells to Ukraine to $230 per 1,000 cubic meters from the current $50. *Reuters*

Sudanese hostages freed in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Five Sudanese hostages held by al-Qaida in Iraq were reported on Saturday to have been freed, as at least 14 people were killed in a series of attacks across the country. A day after Khartoum shut down its embassy in Baghdad in line with the kidnappers' demands, Al-Jazeera television said the Sudanese foreign ministry has announced the release of the five hostages, who included a diplomat. The Iraqi government in Baghdad was unable to confirm the report. Al-Qaida on Thursday claimed the kidnapping of five Sudanese in an Internet statement, giving Khartoum 48 hours to break off diplomatic relations with Baghdad, close its embassy and "withdraw all its representatives" in Iraq. Khartoum then closed down its embassy and withdrew its diplomats on Friday. *AFP*

Sharon to undergo heart operation

JERUSALEM—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon will undergo a heart operation on Thursday, the Haaretz newspaper reported Sunday. Doctors at Hadassah Ein Kerem hospital in Jerusalem will perform a so-called balloon angioplasty, a standard treatment for coronary artery disease, in which the blood flow to the heart is restricted. In the operation a tiny balloon will be inserted into an artery to push fatty plaque back against the artery wall to make more room for blood to flow. This improved blood flow reduces the risk of heart attack and sudden cardiac death. "The decision to operate on the prime minister will be made by his doctors. An official communique will be published," a senior official at the prime minister's office told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity *AFP*

Saying goodbye to the 'Hello Garci' year

From page A1

Overall, firecracker victims had an average age of 18 years. The oldest was 88 and the youngest, 10 months old.

Neldina Laride, 43, of Pagadian City, was injured on Saturday night even while she was not doing anything. She was asleep when a bullet tore through her roof and grazed her head.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III attributed the slight increase in the overall casualty toll to cheap firecrackers smuggled from China, and to an old Filipino-style pyrotechnic reintroduced to the market last month.

The device is called "boga," a makeshift cannon made of plastic pipe whose explosion is triggered by denatured alcohol.

About 20 percent of all firecracker-related cases involved eye injuries and "boga," which hit 16 people and was partly blamed for a significant increase in such injuries.

Fewer stray bullets

The Pagadian woman might not agree but officials said one bright spot in the latest celebration was the marked decrease in the number of people hit by stray bullets.

Based on monitoring since Dec. 21, the figures were down by 40 percent to 19, compared with 33 people hit in 2004.

Counting all types of injuries, including those caused by firecrackers, stray bullets and others, the DOH recorded a total of 610 cases during the 12-day period, representing a 4-percent increase from the previous 585 cases.

Combined DOH and Philippine National Police figures showed three people died in the run-up to 2006, including two people who swallowed the poisonous "dancing firecracker" known as "watusi," and 6-year-old Alistair Edev Sofia, who was killed by indiscriminate firing on Christmas Day in General Trias, Cavite.

Well worth it

"That's not bad. It's good enough," Duque said, referring to the DOH information campaign to curb violence during New Year celebrations.

Asked if the results were worth the P1.3 million spent on the information drive, he said: "Oh yes, it's certainly was worth it ... we might have to spend a little bit more (in the coming years) to ensure greater reach."

The latest figures were not far different from those in the last five years, when the injury totals hovered between 500 and 600 cases, he said.

As many as 1,000 casualties were recorded in 2000.

Poor bystanders

Another disturbing figure that showed up in the latest monitoring period was that nearly half (47 percent) of the 582 people injured by firecrackers were apparently bystanders. Half of the number were also children aged 15 years and under.

"The implication was that these people suffered from firecrackers thrown at them by irresponsible handlers," said Dr. Eric Tayag, head of the DOH National Epidemiology Center.

In the overall casualty toll, Metro Manila registered the biggest number of casualties at 351, followed by Region 4 at 124 cases.

Drastic proposal

With the public apparently learning slowly from mistakes of the previous years, Duque is considering drastic measures to curb firecracker-related injuries.

He suggested that the government use firetrucks and hose down stalls selling pyrotechnic devices. He didn't say if the proposal would include licensed vendors.

But Duque acknowledged his proposal alone wouldn't solve the problem, saying the issue needed a "broader perspective."

"This is an industry," he said. "People's lives, their education are dependent on this. Even if there is a noble intention to completely eradicate this, you can't do this overnight. You must be able to prepare and ease them out of this industry and introduce them to small- and medium-scale enterprises."

Explosion at The Mansion

In Baguio City, the only explosion to rock The Mansion, the President's vacation home, during the New Year's Eve revelry came from the drums of TSgt. Ruben Lorenzana, band leader of the Presidential Security Group Combo. *(See story on Page A2.)*

They spent a good part of the night playing for the First Family.

Reports from police and hospital authorities showed a sober celebration, with fewer cases of firecracker victims in the Bicol region and Lucena City.

With reports from Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; Delfin Mallari Jr., Gil Francis Arevalo and Marciano T. Virola Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Michael Sarcauga and Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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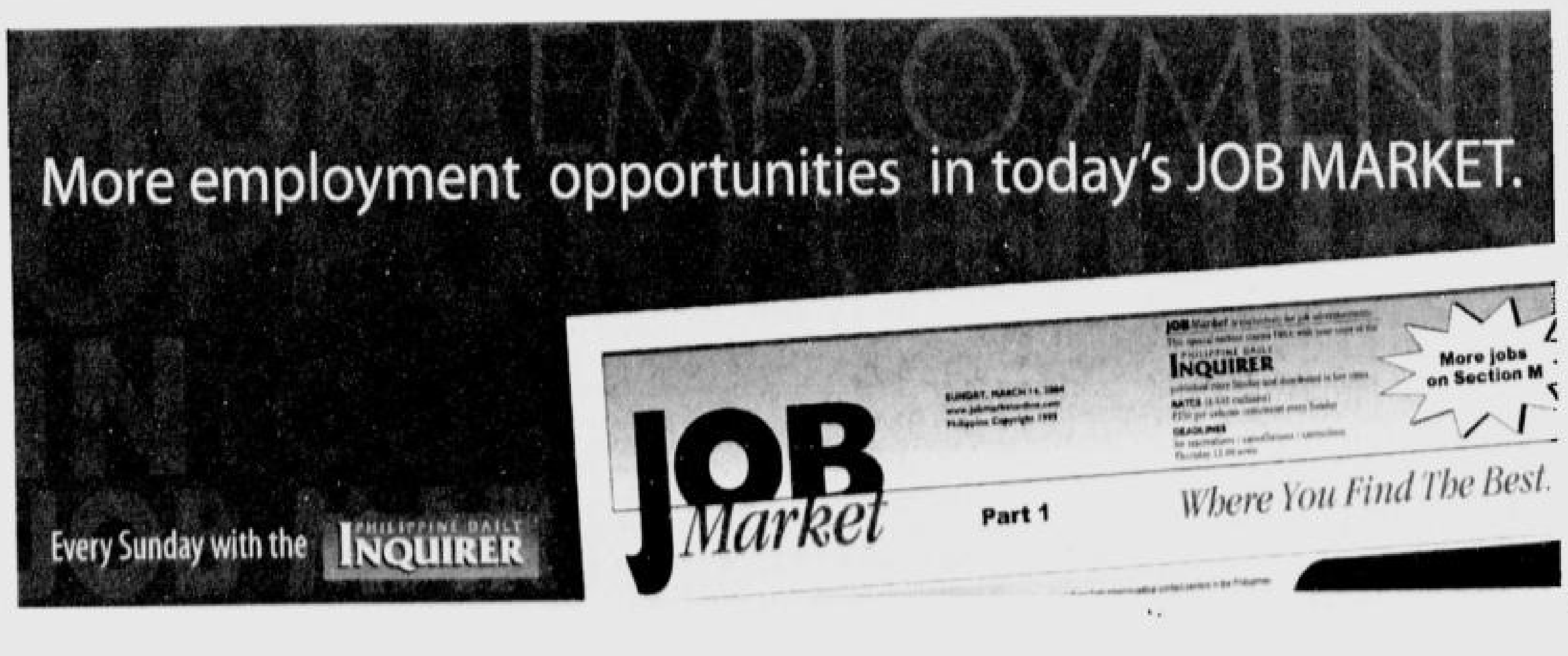
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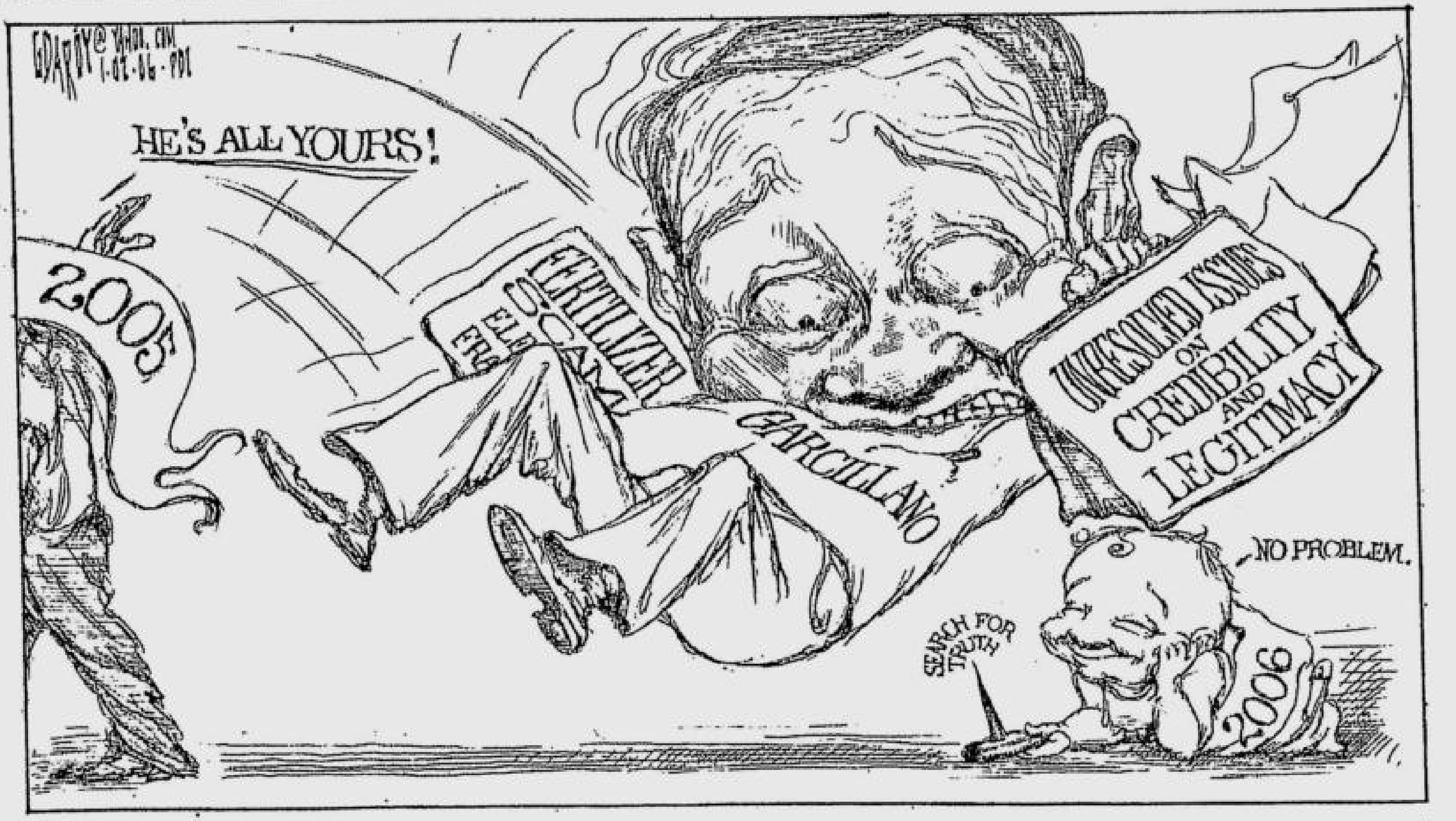

Ghosts of the year past

EDITORIAL

IN HER NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE, THE PRESIDENT used the strengthening of the peso as an omen of good fortune, and then called on the people to "break from the past and face a brave new future." It was yet another variation on a theme she first sounded during the 2004 elections, and then repeated, with renewed emphasis, during her last State of the Nation Address: The Philippines is two countries, one poised for economic takeoff, the other mired in the politics of the past.

It is the responsibility of leadership to set the agenda, and we do not quarrel with the President for trying to set that of a "divided" nation. (Not our word, but hers, as a careful reading of her message will show.)

But we must say a few words about the future she says is brave and new, the past she wants the country to break from, and, yes, even the responsibilities of presidential speechwriters who write messages about the past and the future.

Let's begin with the speechwriting. Isn't there anyone in the President's inner circle who could have pointed out the insidious connotations when "brave" and "new" are joined together? The satirical Aldous Huxley novel, "Brave New World," did not only give us that combustible combination; it also gave us a vivid portrait of a harrowing future.

Unless President Macapagal-Arroyo wanted to telegraph a plan to reengineer the country's future to turn it into an impossible paradise, her speechwriters did her a disservice. What probably happened is something another prophetic writer of dystopian fiction, George Orwell, could have predicted: the political writers use of "prefabricated" language—without thinking—to fill in the blanks.

But there is no mistaking who owns the central idea in the President's New Year message; it is, it must be, the President herself. The notion of a complete break with a rotten political system entered current public discourse only through Ms Arroyo's "I am sorry" speech.

There is much to be said for the idea; we do not need a practicing politician to tell us that our political system needs drastic reform or even a complete overhaul. But the President's remarkable attempt to indict the culture she grew up in and became so good at is ultimately an attempt to evade accountability for more specific acts. By claiming, "The system made all of us do it," she must have hoped to avoid answering for the allegedly wire-tapped conversations with election expert Virgilio Garcillano. But if by her appeal to "break from the past and face a brave new future" she was asking the public to move on and, perhaps, join the "great debate" (again, her words) on Charter change, then we can say with certainty that her appeal will go unheeded.

The reality is, the day of reckoning is still to come. No amount of good news on the macro-economic front will mask that. No act of political legerdemain will magically push Charter change to the next level unless the Senate is ready. And no tinkering with the political or legislative calendars will alter the fact that, when the third session of the 13th Congress opens in July, new impeachment complaints against the President will be filed, and another impeachment crisis will be upon us.

That is the future that lies ahead of us; it is neither brave nor new, only inevitable. From the point of view of a functioning democracy, it is also necessary.

In fact, President Arroyo is treading dangerous ground when she wraps her administration's colors around the latest macro-economic numbers. The appreciating peso is a double-edged sword because, of course, a stronger peso also means more expensive Philippine exports and, ironically, lesser purchasing power for OFW families.

Also, respected economists, such as Cielito Habito, have raised superior arguments to explain why they think all may not be well with the domestic economy. Even one of the government's economic managers has already pointed out the obvious: One reason OFW remittances are so important now is that domestic growth has not been as robust as expected.

In economics, as in politics, the day of reckoning may be delayed, but it cannot be denied.

Don't believe those predictions

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THIS IS THAT TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN fortune-tellers, psychics, astrologers, stargazers, soothsayers, crystal gazers, card and palm readers of all sizes, ages, and sexes come out of the woodwork and predict what's going to happen in the new year. Whatever you call them, they're all the same. Most of them are charlatans, fakes, impostors, frauds, cheats, quacks, pretenders, etc. For nobody can really tell the future, except a criminal who plans to murder somebody or a politician planning to cheat in an election. They're all pulling our legs. But media, for lack of anything else better to broadcast or publish during the season, give them their few minutes or several column inches of fame. And so they come out at this time like a plague and pretend to tell the future. In so doing, they "idiotize" Filipinos and make them believe in superstitions and other forms of hogwash.

They get away with it because when their predictions don't come true during the year, nobody remembers. The people are preoccupied with listening to more predictions from more fortune-tellers. And when an event remotely resembling a prediction happens, the fortune-teller who made that prediction trumpets it to the world and never lets the people forget it for years to come.

The only person I know whose prediction is coming true to the last detail these days is—guess who?—President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Four years ago, on Rizal Day in Baguio, she said, as she promised not to run for president in the elections of 2004 (I am quoting from the Dec. 30 editorial of the INQUIRER): "If I were to run, it would require a major political effort on my part. But since I am among the principal figures in the divisive national events of the last two or three years, my political efforts can only result in never-ending divisiveness. On the other hand, relieved of the burden of politics, I can devote the last year and a half of my administration to the following: First, strengthening the economy to create more jobs, and to encourage business activity that is unhampered by corruption and red tape in government. Second, healing the deep divisions within our society. Third, working for clean and honest elections in 2004."

Everything that she predicted has come true. Because she broke her promise not to run, the country is now torn apart by "never-ending divisiveness." It will not end even with the end of the old year, and it will not end in the new year. It will end only when she gives up the position that she has usurped.

For instead of "working for clean and honest elections in 2004," she, in a "mighty political effort" with the help of Garci, et al., made it the dirtiest in the history of the Philippines. And although the peso has strengthened—not because of her but because of the remittances of overseas Filipino workers (who have to work in other countries because she has not been able to create more jobs for them)—corruption and red tape are still rampant in government. And instead of "healing the deep divisions in our society," she has, as she predicted, only worsened the divisiveness.

If Ate Glue leaves Malacañang, she can do a better job telling fortunes in Quiapo.

* * *

While the year is still young, I will hazard a prediction myself (though I admit I can be wrong, considering the characters, tricks, ambition and determination of politicians): the Senate will not dance the Cha-cha this year. The administration does not have the numbers in the Senate as it has in the House. Cha-cha needs a two-thirds majority to pass in the Senate. There are 23 senators. You need only six votes to defeat it. There are already eight opposition senators, and most of the administration senators are also against it. Right now, there are only two senators who are openly for it: Angara and Enrile.

Here's another prediction: Joe de Venecia will not become prime minister this year or the next. Neither will Fidel V. Ramos.

And here's another: In the remote possibility that our system of government is changed to parliamentary because of the combined efforts of Ate Glue, FVR and JDV, this Gang of Three, this Unholy Trinity, will double-cross one another during the elections for prime minister.

JDV thinks he has the full support of his provincemate, FVR, for the prime ministership, but the former may be up for a disappointment. Because he is not disqualified from running, FVR can run for Member of Parliament in his district in Pangasinan. Once in Parliament, enough fellow MPs can be made to elect him PM. *Sorry na lang kay* JDV. FVR can always say: "What can I do? How can I refuse the call of my country?"

FVR and JDV also think that Ate Glue will not contest the prime ministership. One would think that she has had her fill of high office after two terms as president. But ambition and delusion know no bounds. Because she is not banned by the proposed Constitution from running, she can run for MP in her district in Pampanga. Once in Parliament, as the immediate former president, she will have the edge in the contest for the position of PM. *Sorry na lang kay* FVR and JDV.

So you can expect more divisiveness if we change to a parliamentary system.

And here is a final prediction: The presidency of the University of the Philippines will no longer have the respect it used to have. The reputation of the UP presidency will be forever tarnished. Why?

Because one former UP president allowed himself to be used by politicians for political ends—when he accepted the chairmanship of the Consultative Commission, which was created for only one purpose: to draft an idiotic Constitution made to order for Ate Glue. That's enough to make UP alumni and students puke.

Deeply upright, deeply crooked

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ABRAHAN LLERA HAD AN INTERESTING point last week. (PDI, 12/27/05) He said the people who put up the ad defending Archbishop Fernando Capalla misunderstood my column completely. "De Quiros did not call the bishop 'deeply crooked.' What he described as 'deeply crooked' is the double-faced (religious) practice of Filipinos....What the prelate could have done was to have pointed out to De Quiros where he was wrong—not about the bishop—but about the Catholic faith for, indeed, it was plain that De Quiros was grossly misinformed."

First off, my thanks for the spirited defense. It helps to reassure that reading skills have not completely disappeared from this country. When some of the religious and secular leaders of this country themselves show a gargantuan lack of comprehension, you begin to wonder where we're headed. I'm glad there's Llera to restore my faith in the future of Philippine literacy.

But I beg to disagree about being grossly misinformed about the Catholic faith. I wasn't talking about the Catholic faith in general, I was talking about the Catholic faith as we practice it. I did say in that column that it was tempting to attribute the hypocrisy or double-standards or schizophrenia, however you choose to call it, to the nature of the Catholic faith as opposed to say, Protestantism, with its work ethic and emphasis on conscience rather than on external guidance to live a good life. But Latin America is there to show that Catholicism can also inspire liberation and Protestantism can also serve the cause of repression. Long before Pat Robertson urged George W. Bush to take out the president of Venezuela, he had been urging Ronald Reagan to take out America's enemies in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

I won't repeat the reasons for saying our practice of the Christian faith is more ritualistic than internalized, more form than substance. What I will do is go further and say that the malady is not limited to our practice of faith, it extends to our practice of the most vital things in life. It extends to our practice of democracy, our practice of law, the very way we conceive of ourselves as Filipinos.

We have the formal properties of democracy, but we do not have the essence of democracy. We have elections, we have a free press, we have civil liberties, but the rich are never jailed for all sorts of crimes, including murder; taxes are treated as gratuity to public officials and not as funds to give back in roads and bridges; the people are powerless to seek redress for grievances. The essence of democracy is a strong people, not a strong republic. A strong people is what we do not have. Indeed, today, we are hard put to find even the formal properties of democracy. We have elections but the votes are stolen, we have a free press but journalists are murdered for reporting wrongdoing, we have civil liberties but they are curtailed at every turn in the name of fighting terror.

Yet we pride ourselves with being a democracy because we go through the motions of having one. It is not unlike a rapist, murderer and wife-beater who goes to church in his Sunday best, believing a few Our Father's, Hail Mary's and Glory Be's will expunge his soul of sin.

The same is true of law. Nowhere will you find more lawyers than in this country, but nowhere will you find more lawlessness than in this country. This is a country that believes—or doesn't mind if people believe it or not—that if you go through a legal process, what comes out at the end of it must be legal. When in fact all it really does is repeat the fundamental characteristic of a PC: garbage in, garbage out. I personally thought I had seen the worst uses of law during Marcos' time, when the law was directly conscripted to foment lawlessness. When the law was used to justify repression, pillage and mayhem. When it was used to thwart justice, goodness and decency. I never thought I'd live to see it repeated so soon.

Five years ago, as a result of the impeachment trial, every kid wanted to be a lawyer once again, with Hilario Davide showing how the law could be used for the loftiest ends. Last month, as a result of Virgilio Garcillano's resurrection, enrollment in law schools is likely to reach an all-time low. Lest we forget, Garcillano is a lawyer, living proof how the law is currently being used for the lowliest ends. But that is government's tack today, as it was in Marcos' time: We have the letter of the law, we have law.

It's the same as well of Filipino identity. The truly ironic thing that happened last year was the attempt to disqualify Fernando Poe Jr. from running for president on the ground that he wasn't a Filipino. As it turned out, of course, the legal grounds were completely manufactured, the product of perjury and tampered evidence.

But quite apart from that, it boggled the mind that the one person who had pretty much defined for several generations of Filipinos what being Filipino meant—Ang Panday, Agila, Asedillo, Totoy Bato, Daniel Barrion, Batang Quiapo—who had shown a loyalty and dedication to country beyond the call of "Action!"—should be considered a fake Filipino. While the one person who had always boasted about studying in the United States and having Bill Clinton for classmate, who flew the flag of America, who so believed in George W. Bush heart and soul that she was willing to imperil the OFWs in the Middle East to join the fellow's unholy crusade in Iraq, should be adjudged a dyed-in-the-wool, bona fide, out-and-out, Filipino.

"*Ganda ng porma!* (It looks good!) is a phrase we often use to admire things. At its best, it means we have aesthetics; at its worst; it means we're suckers for appearances. That's what makes us what we are: deeply upright, deeply crooked.

Unleashing the coco potential

COMMENTARY

Ronna D. Mercado,
Institute on Church and Social Issues

THE RECENT TRIUMPH IN THE BBC WORLD Challenge of the Philippines' coconet, a soil erosion net made from coconut husks, was welcome news for the country and for the coconut industry, in particular. The recognition—along with the respect won by virgin coconut oil in health circles; the increasing interest in alternative fuel sources, like biodiesel (coco methyl ester); and the market potential for geotextiles (cocofiber)—points to a brighter future for the coconut industry.

However, despite contributing to the national economy an average annual earning of $690.5 million during the period 2000-2004, the coconut industry remains in a moribund state, snagged by several problems which are not insurmountable. Among these are low farm productivity due to aging trees and monocropping, low farmgate prices, lack of research and development and lack of infrastructure support. All these have also worked to ensure that coconut farmers are among the Philippines' poorest citizens.

Around 90 percent of coconut farmers and farm workers live below the poverty line. A typical coconut farmer earns P12,000 annually or around P33 per day. It is very hard to imagine how a coconut farmer can support a family of six with this kind of income.

To help the farmers and to unleash the potential of the coconut industry, financial resources are undoubtedly needed to fund programs and to address the problems that have long hobbled the industry.

The coco levy fund exists precisely for this purpose. The levy was initially intended by the Marcos administration to address the crisis brought about by an "abnormal situation in the world market for fats and oils." However, succeeding presidential decrees made the levy permanent, and eventually it took the nature of private funds "to be owned by the coconut farmers in their own private capacities."

As history would later show, the coco levy fund would be used not for the farmers' benefit but to serve the business interests of some Marcos' cronies. With coco levy money, the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) was acquired and used as a springboard to acquire assets and corporations that were used in turn to put the coconut industry under a monopolistic regime. At the same time, coco levy money was also used for purposes that had nothing to do with the industry, such as the acquisition of San Miguel Corp. (SMC) shares.

It was not until four years ago, in December 2001, that the Supreme Court issued a crucial decision in favor of the coconut farmers. After almost 15 years from the filing of cases for the farmers' recovery of the fund, the high court categorically ruled that the money was public fund. This decision gave way to subsequent Sandiganbayan decisions which recognized the coconut farmers as the owners of coco levy-funded assets and corporations.

Despite these court victories, the farmers have yet to actually benefit from the coco levy fund. The Sandiganbayan still has to issue an order directing the execution of the partial summary judgment on the 27-percent SMC-CIIF (Coconut Industry Investment Fund) shares. Expectedly, persons who have vested interests in the coco levy fund refuse to let go of the fund, or parts of it, without a fight. There have been repeated attempts to strike a compromise deal involving the 27-percent SMC-CIIF shares.

An out-of-court settlement is not acceptable because these shares have already been declared as held by the government in trust for the farmers. The only thing that is left for the Sandiganbayan to do is to declare the decision final and executory. To strike a compromise deal is to favor the very perpetrators of injustice. To compromise is to remove the accountability of those who were responsible for the "systematic plunder of the coconut industry."

An alarming development in the coco levy recovery efforts is the removal of three farmer-directors from the board of UCPB last November. Aside from being vocal with their non-compromising stand, these farmer-directors were against the attempts to use the still contested 20-percent block of SMC shares to pay the UCPB loans of the very people behind the coco levy scam. Even more alarming are the speculations that President Macapagal-Arroyo had a hand in their removal, a move that was effected reportedly to pay political debts incurred when the impeachment case was killed in the House of Representatives.

Unlike other sectors of agriculture, the coconut industry has an enormous pool of funds that can help the industry and its farmers. All that the government has to do is to facilitate the immediate recovery of the coco levy money. During the audit conducted in 1986, it was found out that the original levy had reached the staggering amount of P9.695 billion. At present the levy has an estimated worth of P120 billion. This is a big amount that can go a long way in helping the 25 million people directly and indirectly dependent on the industry. This is equivalent to addressing the economic problems of close to one-third of the country's population.

To borrow the words of the solicitor general in his Aug. 8, 2005 Motion for Execution, the proper use of the levy assets "could be the only hope to genuinely address the multifarious and complicated problems in the coconut industry and the long-standing hardship in the lives of the millions of coconut farmers."

Keeping the fire burning

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

HIGH SCHOOL REUNIONS SELDOM ATTRACTED me. Rather ho-hum activities to me. There were times when I chose to be elsewhere. Many such reunions are rather "symptoms of miseducation." Reviving the old rah-rah yells of yesteryears is one such symptom. In an old all-boys school, some high school reunions often include activities that are good only for the netherworld.

I am proud to say that my own high school class does not hold reunions of that kind. Predictability is our only problem. We meet on the same day each year, every Dec. 28 to be exact. I do not recall now how the date was chosen. All I know is it has nothing to do with the feast of the holy innocents.

But this year was extra special. My Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan high-school class of 1975 had wanted our 30th year to signify the "spirit kept alive beyond 30." I got a surprise when our classmates decided that instead of having the usual lavish Christmas party, our class would hold a special lunch with special children.

Unknown to me, our class had started a project with an orphanage that's getting little public and civic attention because it is run by a government agency. The Reception and Study Center for Children is under the Department of Social Welfare and Development's Region 10 office.

The RSSC is not your typical, straitjacket orphanage. It is on the lookout specifically for children abandoned by parents, disabled children, and children orphaned by armed conflicts. Each of the 34 little wards at RSSC has a heartbreaking story to tell.

One was left in a garbage dump. Another was left in the mall by her mother. One was left in a church doorstep. Four little tykes have cerebral palsy. A few are autistic. Some are disabled. One little boy is blind. A little baby girl has microcephalus. The only thing they share in common is: their parents do not want them.

But the Christmas party my classmates came up with was not the usual one-shot activity highlighted by gift-giving and picture-taking that amount to nothing but PR hype. My classmates went a step farther. They have actually decided earlier last year that the class should adopt the center and help it meet its financial needs. Thus was born the project "Special Care for Special Children."

The class started by taking care of the monthly salary of a caregiver and nursing assistant. As of this writing, the equivalent of a year's salary for the two has been pledged.

My high school class is also supporting two college students. Four years ago, we organized the Fr. Antonio M. Cuna SJ Memorial Scholarship Foundation, in honor of a favorite Jesuit mentor. But this special children project is something else. This one just simply hit all of us in the gut in that reunion. And for the rest of that day, we were kept in a rather contemplative mood.

The project is the brainchild of two classmates: Ruben "Benjie" Paras, our outgoing class president, manages his family's engineering and construction firm. Serge Firmacion, the project's chairman, is busy with his purified water business. It was our incoming president Lourd Ostique who kept us all in touch by short messaging and e-mail. For many years, she was the curator of Museo de Oro. Rodolfo Waga Jr., author of a law book, UP law professor, and with First Philippine Holdings, updated our Manila group.

In our past projects, it was easy to turn to classmates who had the wherewithal. Invariably, the class would turn to Chito Santos, president of Philippine Phosphates. At other times, it would be Cito Lorenzo, former agriculture secretary. An American classmate, Henry Howard, was already supporting nine poor college students when our class started to adopt its own scholars. This time, Special Care appears to be everyone's concern.

"Society calls me a beggar, an eyesore, and a parasite. But what do you call a society that has reduced me to this state?" A Brazilian cleric raised this question some years back. The Special Children project all brought us to the core problem of our society. The conversations at the reunion at times turned to the Gloria-Garci tapes. Many are not GMA fans, including myself. But GMA bashing is not the solution. Neither is it the opposition, many of whom were into cheating themselves and equally deserve to be booted out.

Things are going wrong because of a society that has no more place for God. The day we put God in the center of a society that thinks no more of God as it does with a choice in a cafeteria fast-food menu, that will be the day when children will no longer be abandoned by their parents.

* * *

The third volume of Capitol University's MINDAyawan Journal of Culture and Society is out of the press. This volume's special issue on ethnicity has the essays and papers of Dr. Maragtas Amante of the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations, Dr. Fe Rosales Juarez, Dr. Margarita "Tingting" de los Reyes Cojuangco, Dr. Nagasura Madale, and Prof. Geldolin Inte. Single-issue subscriptions are minimally priced at P150.

Comments to monta@cu-cdo.edu.ph

Refocusing on Roxas

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

MANUEL Roxas (NO "A" IN THE MIDDLE, please; he hated using that middle initial because it would spell out "MAR," a word which means "blemish"), remains a man much maligned by the few people who have not forgotten him completely. But Roxas remains an important example of the timeless charismatic leader—more than, say, Ramon Magsaysay who undoubtedly saved the Republic. But I think Magsaysay, like his predecessor Manuel Quezon and successor Corazon Aquino, were lucky accidents for our country. They could succeed only once and cannot be copied or emulated. They were all too unique and flourished under unique circumstances.

It is realistic to expect another Roxas, though. This is so because the Quezonian type of leadership ("*caudillo* paternalism," some called it) was made obsolete by Magsaysay's version of strongman rule; besides, much of Quezon's success lay in his being the lobbyist par excellence in the United States, where his being a *mestizo* possibly made him more acceptable than the Chinese-looking Sergio Osmeña Sr., or the Filipino-looking Roxas, to Caucasian racists; and, of course, Palace control of the legislature has never been equaled since the pre-war Commonwealth. MLQ's flashy rule reached a dead end. In Magsaysay's case, he changed the way leaders commune with their constituents. But after his unique personality was gone, it was obvious that the only way leaders could hold on to power was through the time-honored methods of patronage. Another dead end.

In Cory Aquino's case, she was the right person at the right time. But someone like her, a political outsider without the usual "qualifications" for political office, cannot thrive in a normal political atmosphere.

On the other hand, Roxas, who derived a great deal of his success from his being young and brilliant, and from his being an economist when economics determined many issues of the day.

Filipinos have always admired intellectual brilliance and prefer their leaders to be young and vigorous. (That is why Miriam Santiago never fails to remind people of her academic distinctions; and that was why a lot of voters decided not to vote for former Senate President Jovito Salonga who was too old when he ran for president).

Roxas was the wunderkind of the politics of his day, lampooned in cartoons which portrayed him in a little boy's sailor suit; and presiding over the House (of which he became Speaker at the age of 30). He was a charismatic man, an eloquent speaker, a bar top-notcher. When a coup in the legislature against Osrox (Osmeña-Roxas) and their supporters resulted in Roxas' removal from the speakership, he declaimed that he was falling from his position of power into the arms of his people, and was lustily applauded by the students who packed the spectator's gallery.

Unfortunately, Roxas has become something of a nonentity in history because of a view articulated by the late columnist I.P. Soliongco, who wrote, in 1957, that "The memory of President Roxas has been forgotten not because the Nacionalistas want it to be so but because history says it must be so. For President Roxas, despite his amazing intelligence and intellectual background, was sadly unaware of the 'historical situation' of his time. Indeed, if the truth be told, what he tried to do was to turn back the clock of history. He dealt with our national problems as if the Philippines were an American colony and the Filipinos the most loyal subjects of the United States." Soliongco went on to say that the acts and agreements which marked Roxas' administration—the Bell Trade Act, the Parity Amendment, the Bases Agreement of 1947—constituted "crimes against nationalism." This remains the conventional view taught in most schools.

As time passes by, the conventional view that Roxas was an American stooge may be facing serious challenge. One example of how a reexamination of Roxas' actions can result in a more favorable appraisal of him can be gleaned from the late Bonifacio S. Salamanca's article in Philippine Studies (Vol. 37, 3rd Quarter, 1989) titled "Quezon, Osmeña and Roxas and the American Military Presence in the Philippines." In the article, Salamanca traces the development of the Philippine government's attitude towards the American bases. Quezon, who had nothing against naval bases, used the Hare-Hawes-Cutting provision (which allowed military bases on land) to whip up support for his "anti-position"; Roxas and Osmeña defended it.

Later, during World War II, Quezon would change his mind and enter into talks to allow US bases (naval and air) after the war was won. When he died, Osmeña was quite happy to adopt the same position.

And so was Roxas when he became President. He assigned Elpidio Quirino, in his capacity as foreign affairs secretary, to conduct negotiations with the domineering American ambassador Paul V. McNutt. Salamanca then describes how Roxas and Quirino played a "good-cop, bad-cop routine," with Roxas as the good cop, to whom the exasperated McNutt would run whenever Quirino stood up for Filipino interests. The result was an agreement which turned out more favorable to the Philippines.

A reexamination of Roxas presidency may lead to the conclusion that he secured a better deal for the country than might otherwise have been expected, just as Magsaysay, who continues to be excoriated by the Left, was responsible for the Laurel-Langley Agreement which shortened the duration of the Bases Agreement.

But these things will remain controversial for a long time to come. As a chief executive, Roxas delegated power freely, was confident of his own capacity, and was an energetic campaigner. He is the prototype of an effective leader, campaigner and executive in the modern age.

Teacher quality

COMMENTARY

Eugenia Duran Apostol

THE "EDUCATION REVOLUTION," WHICH OUR GROUP, the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWPP), started Oct. 12, 2002, is a "running revolution."

Figuratively, two legs power this advocacy. One of them is "community action," where education stakeholders—meaning parents, local business, and private citizens, like you and me—work hand-in-hand with the school faculty to make quality education a continuing community priority and aspiration.

We already talked briefly about community action in our previous commentary, although we did not tell you everything about it; we will do so in future issues.

Today, let's talk about the other leg of the Education Revolution, called "Mentoring the Mentors." (Don't ask us which leg it is, right or left. You see, both are essential and completely important to each other, just like the legs of SEA Games gold medalists Eduardo Buenavista and Merceditas Manipol.)

What exactly is Mentoring the Mentors?

This program is a true "Teacher Quality Initiative" that goes beyond plain teacher training.

The experience begins with eight intensive and highly interactive modules conducted over a five-day period. We won't have enough space to delve into a detailed description of each module.

Suffice it to say that the entire series of sessions aims to introduce the power of "Mentoring" as a new approach to focused learning and self-managed professional development.

Dr. Eve Mejillano, Mentoring the Mentors national coordinator, says that "behind every successful person, there is someone, somewhere, somehow who cared about his or her growth and development. This person was the mentor."

Dr. Mejillano's point brings us to the real meaning of "teacher quality."

The teacher exerts a major influence on the young learner's personality development, often as profound as that of the parents. Aside from her mastery of the subject matter, the teacher's personality traits, her likes and dislikes, even her moods and frailties, all have bearing on the child's formative years.

In pursuing teacher quality, the Mentoring the Mentors Program gives equal importance to skill and motivation. The strategies that a teacher uses to improve learning outcomes form only one part of the equation. Her commitment to inspiring a culture of excellence and positive values in her wards completes the picture.

The Mentoring the Mentors Program's training design is very flexible and highly adaptive. In the course of three years, the FWPP has conducted compact three-day sessions for senior superintendents and regional directors of the Department of Education. At other times, our sessions have been expanded to be more relevant for the faculty of schools and courses dedicated to teacher formation or education.

And how did Mentoring the Mentors come to life?

It all started at a dinner where I happened to be seated beside Ms Chinit Delgado-Rufino. The event was purely social until we got into the subject of what Ms Rufino's Marie Eugenie Institute—based in Assumption San Lorenzo—has been doing these days.

It turned out that Ms Rufino has been implementing an extremely effective teacher formation program for Assumption schools nationwide. Yes, dear reader, Assumption mission schools can be found as far as in the hinterlands of Kidapawan.

The conversation took a very interesting turn when Ms Rufino started to discuss social transformation through the education system. Ms Rufino—or Chinit as she prefers to be called—in turn introduced us to Ms. Lirio Ongpin Mapa from the Center for Leadership and Change.

Not long after, we were privileged to meet Dr. Celia Adriano and Dr. Eve Mejillano, both sterling educators from the University of the Philippines. The two shared our belief that quality education is the key to genuine change and that the teachers have a vital role in this regard. The two educators—not surprisingly—also have quite a number of very workable teaching skills modules.

When Chinit, Celia and Eve got together, it was as if a fire was lit. And the seeds of the Education Revolution was sown.

In 2003, principals and master teachers from all 50 public schools in the Iloilo City schools division led by Mrs. Ida Endonila—their superintendent at that time—participated in the pilot implementation of the FWWPP's Teacher Quality Initiative: the Mentoring the Mentors Program.

Since then, Chinit, Celia, Eve and Lirio have been all over the country, from Region X and XI in Mindanao, Region VI and VII in the Visayas and Region IV in Luzon.

As of this writing, over 2,000 educators—from DepEd school principals and master teachers to superintendents and regional directors to the deans and faculty of "teacher education institutions"—have joined the Education Revolution through the Mentoring the Mentors Program.

The interactive sessions are just the beginning of the experience for the participants. At the last session, the new "mentors-in-training" prepare an action plan which they commit to implement when they resume their duties at their respective schools. For instance:

Butuan City Schools Division

"I will personally and professionally reach out to my fellow teachers and to the community" to make them conscious of how important quality education is for the community as a whole. - Ms Elena Dasilao;

"I will consistently look into the improvement of my pupils' learning." - Ms Precioso Bulado

Batangas City Schools Division

"*Sisikapin kong makatulong sa paghubog ng mga kabataan upang maging maka-Diyos, maka-Kalikasan, maka-tao at makabayan*" (I commit to help our youth become God-centered, environment-conscious and respectful of the rights of others as individuals and as one people). - Ms. Jenith Abucay

"I will strive to inculcate in the community the importance of being a leader in the school." - Mr. Crestituto Tenorio

CARAGA region

"I will become an advocate of change, since I see this as a serious problem not just in our education system, but in the entire country as well." - Ms Conchita Ubay

"I shall always project a cheerful disposition, smile and greet the people because I want my pupils to learn by example." - Ms. Emalina Tabaranza

Finally, from the Iligan City Schools Division

"I should be the model [for change] and that it should start with me." - Ms Vivian Santiago

"I will do everything I can to get more facilities and teaching aids form the pupils in my school so they can learn more easily." - Mr. Alex Bado

The action plans are as diverse as the participants' backgrounds but they have a common goal: quality education through quality teaching

What a way to treat heroes

THESE DAYS WE ALWAYS READ IN newspapers about how the remittances of overseas Filipino workers strengthen the peso and boost the economy in such a way that President Macapagal-Arroyo has declared the Philippine peso as the strongest currency in Asia, if not in the whole world. To say she was exaggerating would be putting it mildly.

As always, these long-suffering OFWs are feted as modern-day heroes. But what a pity the government can't improve its performance and create jobs for them at home, so they wouldn't have to be separated from their families for years on end.

Of course, the poor OFWs have to suffer for being heroes because while their hard-earned dollars have strengthened the peso, in the Philippines, the same dollars now buy less because of inflation. To rub salt on the wounds, some local airlines increased the domestic air fares during the holiday season, when quite a number of OFWs are traveling here by plane.

For instance, a few weeks ago, two domestic airlines were charging about P3,880 for a one-way trip to Cagayan de Oro. A week later, the fare went up to P4,800, yet fuel prices were going down! That was an increase of P1,000 each way within a week! So much for the special fares much advertised by the two companies.

I inquired about the Manila-Cagayan de Oro fare of P1,288, as advertised by an airline in the Dec. 12 issue of the INQUIRER. However, the company's sales person could not even say on what day that fare rate would be available! So much for truth in advertising!

Much worse, as soon as OFWs step out of the arrival area of our international airports, they have to deal with a mafia-like syndicate who operate the various "airport-attached" taxis, but whose fares are at least three times higher than those of metered taxis that are conveniently banned by the airport management from entering the arrival area, to protect the business of the "taxi monopoly" of the syndicate.

What a way to treat our modern-day heroes.

—ROBERT DIX,
Mangatarem, Pangasinan

The problem is the politicians not the existing Constitution

REMEMBER, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-Arroyo fast-tracked the creation of the Consultative Commission because of the "Hello Garci" scandal. Its real objective was to mollify a nation who wanted to oust her. Precisely, the ConCom was meant to accommodate former President Ramos and Speaker Jose de Venecia—who both saw on that critical night of July 8, when the Arroyo regime was about to fall, an excellent opportunity to dangle Charter change as a way of providing GMA a graceful exit by cutting short her term of office to 2007—so they would not join the ouster calls.

Many fell for the ruse. Now, the ConCom has this very unpalatable "extension" proposal for all elective public officials whose terms are expiring in 2007.

For GMA, her political lackeys and media apologists, the proposal is a win-win strategy. If the people don't agree to the proposal, then GMA stays. If the people approve it, then GMA can stay longer in power, as prime minister, of course. (Politicians are most likely to go all-out for its approval since their terms will be extended.) Either way, GMA's term is not cut short. *Tuloy ang ligaya.*

I may be cynical, but I think we're better off with the present Constitution. We don't need a new constitution to pull us forward. We just need to get rid of the politicians who are dragging us down.

—PERRY HUGO,
361 F. Roman, San Juan,
Metro Manila

On with education, no to corruption

NOWADAYS, THE DECISION TO HAVE and raise a child should be made based on how well the parents can answer the question: Do we have both the dedication and the financial capability to support a family?

Unfortunately, I can say that the less fortunate among us are not as conscious about the question as we want them to be because they lack proper education and, therefore, they cannot fully understand the social responsibilities that come with parenthood and raising a child.

In other words, the Philippines is overpopulated because a lot of our countrymen are not properly educated.

I know of a man who was hired as a house caretaker. Let's just call him Fred. He was provided with living quarters by his employer inside the family compound. He has been working for that family for years. He is by any measure a hardworking man, always ready to do this or that for anyone living inside the compound.

When I first met him, he already had four daughters. But he and his wife wanted—and was praying for—a son. Their next baby still turned out to be a girl. He would be reminded from time to time of how harder his life was getting every time his family grew, but Fred brushed those reminders aside as he was determined to have a son. Eventually he got one.

But soon thereafter, his eldest daughter, at the age of 19, eloped with a tricycle driver. She is now the mother of three children. The next year his second daughter, 18 years old then, followed suit, also with another tricycle driver. She has her own two children now and is on her third pregnancy. A few years later, the third daughter, aged 17 then, also eloped with an ice vendor. She has now a 1-month-old baby.

Then Fred became the father of another son, his seventh child.

If Fred were better schooled, he would have understood the responsibilities involved in raising a family. He would have sought better employment, and he would, most probably, have fewer children. And his children would have been better provided for and educated and less inclined to eloping or marrying at a very young age. The key is education.

We often hear news reports on how hard our government has been working to boost our economy. Every now and then, we hear officials call on local entrepreneurs to open new job opportunities. But if the opportunities are available, would people qualify, given their lack of education?

However, if the government would invest more in the education of our country's youth, then, in the future, we would have within our hands a vast human resource qualified for employment. And if our officials would provide the atmosphere conducive for investment—and stop the corruption that discourages entrepreneurs—then all would be well.

—MARIE LAURENT F. MENDOZA,
2 Tinio St., San Rafel Homesite,
San Rafael, Tarlac City

Pedal-power commuting

THIS IS ABOUT THE ARTICLE "EXTRA challenge: 120 km in 3 days." (PDI, 12/04/05) And to the three very brave souls who rode the bike to write that article, I say thank you. I'd like to see the day when the majority of the commuters in Metro Manila move around in bicycles.

I drive to work and, in the early morning, I can see a few brave souls commuting to their work on all sorts of bicycles (beater bikes, bmx's, hybrids, etc). This is a start, but it would go a long way if they and their mode of transportation would be given enough positive media coverage. A large number of blue- and white-collar workers might just get interested and muster enough courage to take "pedal-power commuting" more seriously.

Needless to say, government support should also be in place in terms of having the right infrastructure, road-sharing laws and protection of cyclists' rights.

All this would contribute to the restoration of a clean and beautiful urban environment.

—ARCHIE APOSTOL,
archie.apostol@gmail.com

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Editorial polemics

I'M GLAD THAT THE INQUIRER AGREES that "Bonifacio and Estrada suffered similar fates because the elite could not accept the idea of a man of the masses leading them"; and that there are many "similarities between Bonifacio and Estrada." However, the INQUIRER editorial (PDI, 12/20/05) emphasized historically irrelevant dissimilarities and resurrected the polemics concerning President Erap's "morality," and so-called lack of work ethic.

Here are further similarities between Erap and Bonifacio.

First, the Edsa II elite wanted to eliminate Erap. If Erap did not experience a "similar bloody and fatal end," it was because Edsa II was watched by the entire world and the Filipino masses. In 1897, the Cavite elite successfully eliminated Bonifacio because he was not in his territory and no one overseas manifested any interest in the crime. However, if Erap would be condemned and sentenced to death by lethal injection, his fate would be no different from that of Bonifacio.

The second similarity is: both Bonifacio and Erap were denied leadership roles by the elite because of their being "uneducated." Bonifacio was also accused of plundering the funds of the Katipunan and stealing the rifles of Aguinaldo's "government," when all of these really belonged to Bonifacio and his soldiers.

Aguinaldo called him "a cruel man." As mentioned in the editorial, Makapagal also pictured Bonifacio as a coward. The testimony was self-serving because it was written some 30 years after the crime, at a time when Bonifacio's murder was being strongly condemned. It was not corroborated by other witnesses. It was inconsistent with the courage displayed by Bonifacio during his arrest and trial, for which we have contemporaneous primary sources.

The third similarity concerns the coups d'état. At Tejeros, the elite wanted to establish a "Republic" and elect a new leadership, instead of continuing the Katipunan setup of the state. All that Aguinaldo could do was to retreat to positions prepared by Bonifacio's followers. Reaching Biak-na-Bato, he would (again!) establish a "republic," only for the purpose of surrendering the Revolution to the Spaniards. Edsa II supposedly required "new politics" and a "strong republic." What the Edsa II elite apparently really wanted was exactly that which they unjustly accused Erap of—i.e., institutionalize *jueteng* and corruption; consolidating this later through cheating in the 2004 elections, and subsequently covering this up and dismissing the impeachment complaint.

I do not agree that President Erap did nothing during his presidency. I hope the INQUIRER editors will read my book, which shows how unfair and unjustified the accusations are. In my considered opinion, Erap's presidency was a success—and would have been more successful had the elite not prevented him from carrying out his programs for the poor, and sabotaged his efforts to put the country in order.

—DR. ZEUS SALAZAR,
dr_zeus_salazar@hotmail.com,

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Monday, January 2, 2006

ALL NEW SEASON
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—MONDAY 10PM
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ABC

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THE APPRENTICE
Martha Stewart
TUESDAY 10PM
ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			Winner TV Shopping		Speed		TNA Impact		Sentro	Friends	Guinness Book Of Record		Fear Factor		Big News	The Apprentice		Toloo TV	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Pilipinas Game KNB?	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Only You	Vietnam Rose	Pinoy Big Brother	OK Fine Whatever			Insider
AXN		SWAT Police			Maximum Exposure (Season II)		E Buzz	PSI Factor (Season III)		24		The 4400		Numb3rs (Season I)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 4)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 4)	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Powerpuff Girls	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Codename Kids Next Door		The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Machine Robo-Rescue	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinemax	Reality Bites (2:45PM)				King Ralph			Anger Management (6:15PM)				The Skulls III			Demolition Man (9:45PM)				The Dentist (11:40PM)
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			So Little Time		Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN	Table Tennis '05 Killerspin	Pool/ Snooker Premier Snooker League '05				Boxing Series Friday Night Fights				English Premier League Highlights		Sportscenter Asia	World Terrain Masters '04		TNA Impact		Pro Billiards 2005 Men's World Summit of Pool		Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Complete Savages	Knock First	Today Weekend		Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Friends	Will & Grace	The O.C.		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		ET Weekend		For Love Or Money	
EWTN	Benediction And Devotion Encore	Angelus (3:15PM)	Bible Treasure Chest	Image Of God	St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Voices On Virtue	EWTN Gallery	The Catholic Faith & Vatican II	Sunday Night With (Encore) Fr. Benedict Groeschel		Threshold Of Hope		Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Defending Life	Catholic Compass	
Fox News		Fox Report Sunday		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In	Fox & Friends				Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	Date With Tiffany		Dragonball Z	Slam Dunk	Frog Prince	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Etheria	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace/Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi		
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched IV	Mitch Albom's 5 People You Meet In Heaven		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Who's The Boss	Bewitched IV	The Nanny III	Changi		Judging Amy		Naughty Or Nice			Mcleod's Daughters IV (10:35PM)		Strong Medicine (11:25PM)
HBO	Out of Africa (2:45PM)						Harriet The Spy			Striking Distance (7:15PM)				Envy			Back To The Future		
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Home Shopping Network		ME TV					IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV		South Park	Street Smarts	Wwe Heat		WWE Velocity		Cheat	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		Sweet Spot	Comedy Central Presents	Comedy Central Presents	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Blue Collar TV	Banzai	Joe Schmo Show	
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	101 Most Awesome Moments		NY Fashion Week	Life & Style		Living Spaces	Style Star	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
MTV Philippines	Rockola	MTV Ask	Chart Attack		Viva La Bam	Pop Inc		MTV Hits				Massive	Get Spotted	TRL		The 70's House	Wild N' Out	Homecoming	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	OPM MYX	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	MYXLOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten			Mobile MYX Top Picks	Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic		Dangerous Encounters		Bug Attack		Snake Wranglers	Totally Wild	Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Dangerous Encounters		Wild Sex: Deviants?/Macho Males/Femme Fatales/Swingers	
NBN		Value Vision		New Life TV Shopping		Teledyaryo	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo				Dial M		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues/ What Planet Are You From	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot/ Right On Top	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	SpongeBob SquarePants	Fairly Odd Parents	All That	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	Drake & Josh	The Fairly Odd Parents	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	Chalkzone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	The Brothers Garcia
PBO			Hiwaga Ng Pandav				Anghel Sa Lupa				Magic Combat				Imortal				Sex Drive
Qtv		Bodyguard	Striker Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Star	Hotelier	All In	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	H3O Hahaha...Over!		News On Q	Liga Ng Kababaihan		Groupee TV	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Scare Tactics	NBA On RPN	Oras Ng Himala				Newswatch Now	Simple Life 2	Carge For Truth	
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Sagupaan		Sportsdesk	NBA Jam	Oras ng Kalokohanan		Sony Bmg Video			
Solar Sports	WTA 2005 Tour Champs by LA Round Robin				WTA 2005 Tour Champs by LA Round Robin			IBF China Open Finals Women's Singles						NBA Game Jazz @ Lakers					NBA Inside Stuff
Sports Plus		Pac 10 TBD				Ultimate Fighting Championship				NFL 2005 Miami @ New England						Wendy's Three-Tour Challenge Day 2			
Star Movies			Class Action (3:40PM)				The In-Laws (5:35PM)			Jeepers Creepers 2 (7:15PM)				Control			The Rats (A.K.A. The Colony)		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Whose Line Is It Anyway?	Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends	Married To The Kellys	Everybody Loves Raymond	King Of Queens	Becker	Monk		Friends	Married To The Kellys
Studio 23		Yugioh Duel Monster						Get Backers	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	The Swan Season 2		Tru Calling (8:20PM)	Charmed (9:10PM)		News Central	The West Wing		Travel Time

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Mayors told: Don't blame Lafayette

LEGAZPI CITY—ALBAY GOV. FERNANDO GONZALES cautioned local officials against blaming the Lafayette mine spill for allegedly contaminating the waters along the coastal towns of Sorsogon.

Gonzales said that, as an active member of the monitoring team, he knew that all aspects—including the contamination of detergents used by Lafayette personnel—were being monitored and studied.

"Our findings show the company does not use mercury in processing the ores," he said.

Gonzales said Prieto Diaz Mayor Bonito Doma should not blame the mine spill for the fish scare that had affected the coastal towns of Sorsogon, Doma's town in particular.

The Albay governor said determining the source of mercury would put to rest the issue of Lafayette's culpability in the contamination.

Gonzales said the withdrawal of Lafayette's mining operation would take away very significant investment and employment opportunities, not to mention the taxes and dues the mining firm pays to the provincial government.

Last Wednesday, protesters, led by Doma and Sorsogon City Mayor Sally Lee, staged a "fluvial rally" assailing the mining firm for the toxic contamination that caused fish kills and triggered a fish scare in Albay and Sorsogon.

Some of the operations of the Lafayette Philippines Inc. (LPI) have been suspended pending final study or findings of the independent monitoring team formed by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

LPI executives said they were supporting an investigation of the cause of the contamination of bodies of water in Sorsogon in a gesture of transparency in the firm's operations.

The firm said it has started repairs in its waste discharge system following the leak of cyanide into several bodies of water in Rapu-Rapu town in Albay, where the mining site is located.

The mining firm also vowed to open up its operations to groups and individuals in a bid to make the mining project as transparent as possible.

Mining has generated at least 1,000 new jobs in the Bicol region and is projected to generate some 1,000 more this year.

Reynulfo Juan, MGB Bicol regional director, said the jobs generated were in accordance with President Macapagal-Arroyo's commitment to create more employment opportunities in the mining sector in Bicol.

Residents of Rapu-Rapu, where Lafayette operates, were among the beneficiaries of new jobs.

The Rapu-Rapu Polymetallic Project will be the fist large-scale metal mine to be developed and operated under the Mining Act of 1995, according to Juan. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

THEIR YEAR

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Dogs relax outside a house in Central Maligcong in Bontoc, Mountain Province, getting better treatment from their owners as the year 2006 is theirs, according to Chinese astrology.

Report says household wastes caused fishkills

CALAUAN, LAGUNA—EXCESSIVE quantities of household organic wastes, and not excretions from industrial firms, killed fish in San Pedro town here and Muntinlupa City recently, according to the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA).

In an interview with the INQUIRER Thursday, Jerry Carandang of the LLDA's Public Information Unit, said that contrary to common belief, the cause of the fishkills in Barangay Tunasan, Muntinlupa City and Barangay Cuyab, San Pedro, Laguna in early November was the high level of wastes from households and decayed parts of water hyacinths.

Carandang said the LLDA, including local government units and non-government organizations, is now preoccupied in a massive educational campaign to promote better systems in disposing of organic wastes coming from households.

He cited scientific studies that organic wastes from households comprised 70 percent of the total amount of pollutants that are thrown into the lake.

An earlier report reaching the INQUIRER said that tests from water samples collected by the LLDA from four monitoring stations near the fishkill sites showed that "stress due to very low level of dissolved oxygen in the water" caused the fishkills. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

'WAG MO ITAPON ANG KALAT MO SA BAHAY KO!

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Solcom tells traders to reject NPA taxation

LUCENA CITY—THE SPOKESPERSON of the military's Southern Luzon Command based here in Camp Nakar appealed to businessmen not to give in to the communist New People's Army rebels' imposed taxation.

Army Maj. Jose Broso, Solcom spokesperson, said that while it is understandable that most of the businessmen give in because of fear, "they should not hesitate to ask help and protection from proper government authorities."

Broso also warned businessmen that the NPA will continue to bleed them dry if they continue to provide money and all kinds of support to the "enemy of the state."

"The rebel's gun bought with the money is also being used against anyone who will refuse to pay," he said.

He said government authorities could also file corresponding criminal charges against business groups or individuals proven to be supportive of the NPA through the payment of the so-called revolutionary tax. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

GMA PR team reassesses performance

BAGUIO CITY—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo met the government's communications team for a yearend evaluation of its failure to promote her administration's successes.

But the team decided to ignore the "Hello Garci" controversy that was ignited when Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye released allegedly wiretapped conversations between Ms Arroyo and an election official this year, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters in a press conference at the presidential Mansion here.

The scandal continues to hound the government, Ermita said, but the Palace has decided to distance itself from the controversy while the Senate and the House of Representatives finalize their report based on several inquiries into the tapes and their contents.

Ermita said the communications team has assured the President that mechanisms have been instituted which will secure her and officials against future wiretapping attempts.

Whodunnit

He said it was clear to the Palace that the wiretapping operation was conducted by members of the military.

Ms Arroyo said she met with Bunye, Ermita, Secretary Renato Velasco, director general of the Philippine Information Agency, and Cerge Remonde, head of the government media group.

She also asked Secretary Silvestre Afable, head of the peace panel negotiating with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and Environment Secretary Michael Defensor to join the evaluation meeting from 1 to 4 p.m. here.

Afable was Palace communications director when the "Hello Garci" tapes first surfaced in June. Defensor acted as de facto spokesperson for Ms Arroyo during the presidential campaign in 2004.

Priorities

Ms Arroyo, on Tuesday night, said her action plans for 2006 begins with a government streamlining program and a lobby for constitutional reforms to attack poverty and revive the economy. She said 2006 would also require her administration to secure peace in Mindanao and reform the country's environmental programs.

Ermita said the team was tasked with promoting these government targets.

He said the team acknowledged its faults during the meeting with Ms Arroyo, but he did not enumerate them during the press briefing. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Bohol folk ready hero's burial for Pinay soldier slain in Iraq

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

MARAVILLOSA

CEBU CITY—FOR making Boholanos proud because she proved to be a true "kaliwat ni Dagohoy" (a descendant of Dagohoy), US Army Sgt. Myla Lumayag Maravillosa will be honored as a returning hero when her body arrives in Tagbilaran City next week.

Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado said Boholanos were saddened by the death of Maravillosa on Christmas Eve in Iraq but at the same time very proud that she showed bravery and courage in serving her adoptive country, the United States.

Aumentado said Maravillosa exhibited the virtue that most Boholanos hold dear, which is bravery. She was, after all, a "kaliwat ni Dagohoy," the governor added, referring to Boholanos being descendants of the great guerrilla warrior Francisco Dagohoy.

The governor said Boholanos are historically brave because of Dagohoy, who holds the country's longest record of 85-year rebellion against the Spanish rulers.

"Boholanos showed they are brave—at the right time and the right way," the governor said.

Aumentado also lauded Maravillosa for dedicating her life in the fight against terrorism.

"We should be proud of her because she was carrying the flag against terrorism and (was there to help) preserve freedom in Iraq, which was one of the missions of the Philippine contingent (that went) to Iraq...," the governor added.

Aumentado said he would lead the provincial government of Bohol in giving honor to Maravillosa upon the arrival of her body in Tagbilaran City.

Aumentado said he would also ask Mayor Josephine Socorro Jumamoy of Inabanga, from where Maravillosa originally hailed before she migrated to Hawaii in 1997, to hold necrological services for Maravillosa.

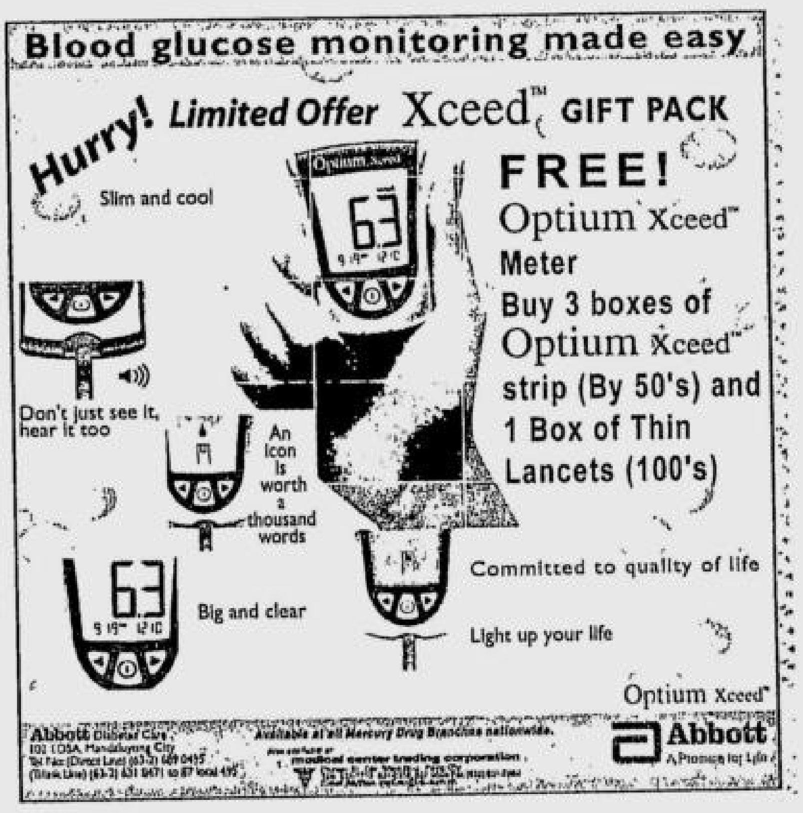
"The provincial government will join in giving her honors, and I will speak during the necrological services that Inabanga will render for her," he said.

Maravillosa was 16 years old when she left Barangay U-og, Inabanga to join her mother, Estelita, who had immigrated to Hawaii. She later joined the US military after she passed the training.

Her relatives in Barangay U-og confirmed that her body will arrive next week, but there was no specific date yet.

Lucresia Lumayag Requerme, her first cousin, said Estelita has yet to call them again on the date of the arrival.

Estelita wanted her daughter buried at the U-og public cemetery near the site of the grave of Myla's grandfather, Agapito Lumayag.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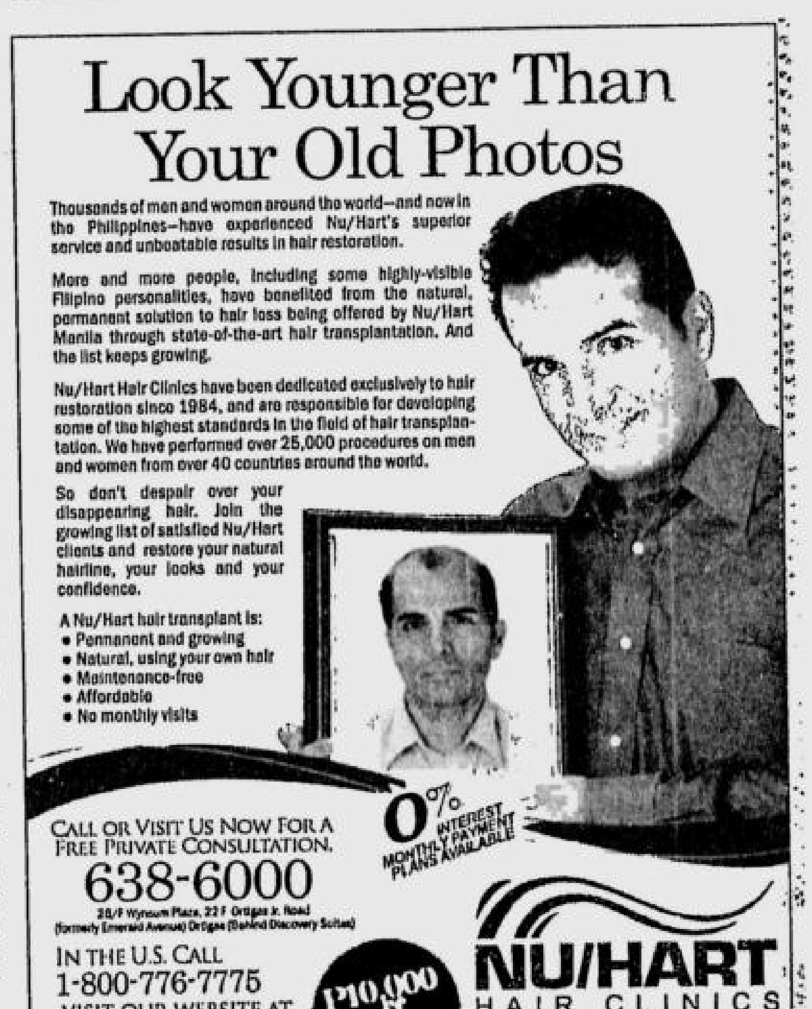
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GMA wants Halsema repair rushed

BAGUIO CITY—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the Department of Public Works and Highways to speed up construction of a section of the Halsema Highway, which links this city to other parts of Benguet and Mt. Province.

During the 109th Rizal Day rites here on Friday, the President asked Mariano Alquiza, DPWH Cordillera director, about the funding status of the highway's rehabilitation, which Ms Arroyo said she wants completed in honor of her father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal. Ms Arroyo said the improvement of Halsema was started during her father's incumbency in the 1960s.

Alquiza said the government has spent P1.4 billion to complete portions of the highway.

He promised Ms Arroyo that a full report and a comprehensive financial profile of the project will be submitted at the start of the year to help accelerate work on the incomplete sections, according to Baguio Councilor Leandro Yangot. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

FRUITFUL
Passion and anonas fruits are endemic in the Cordillera hinterlands and become expensive because of a New Year's belief that round fruits bring good luck. EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

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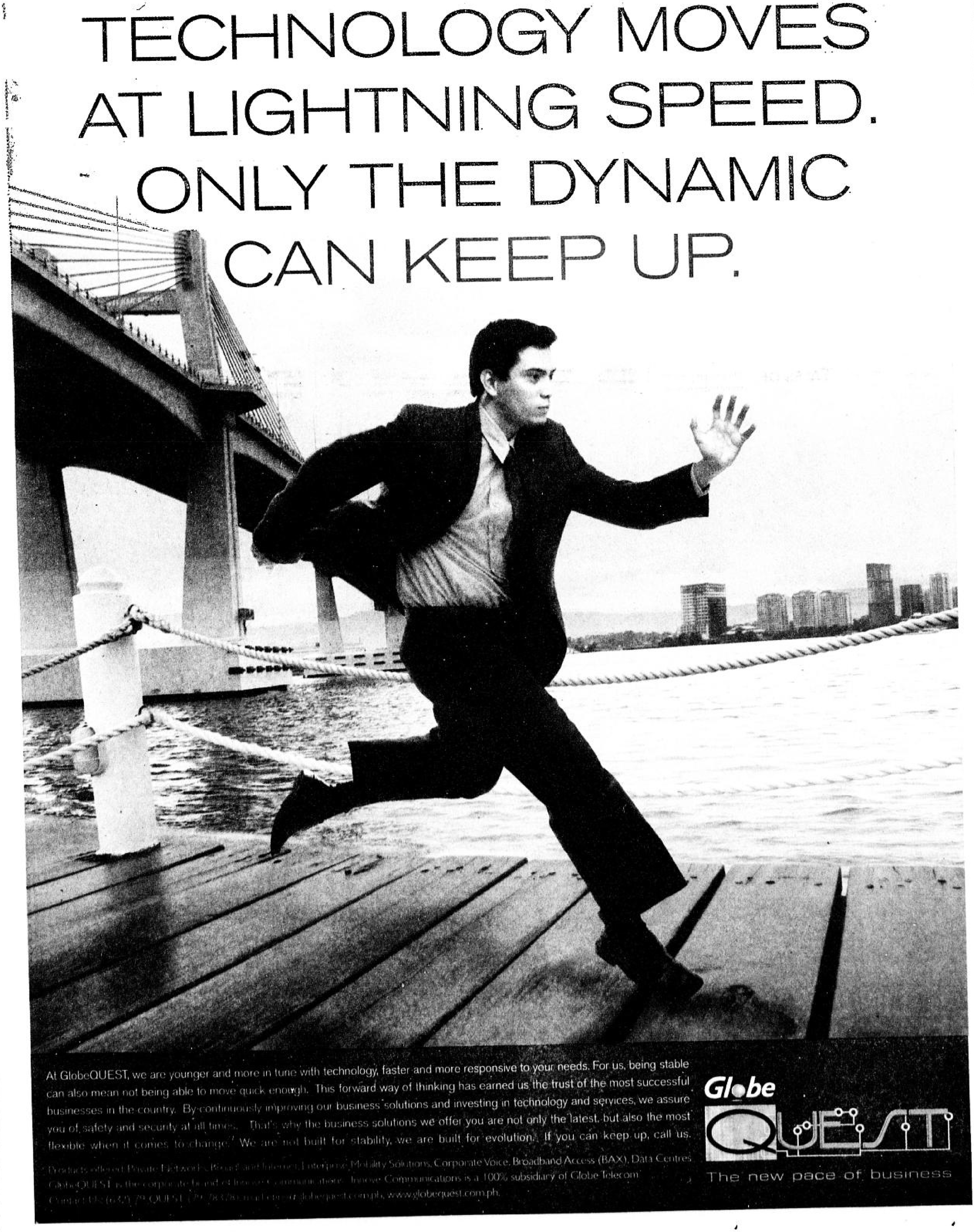
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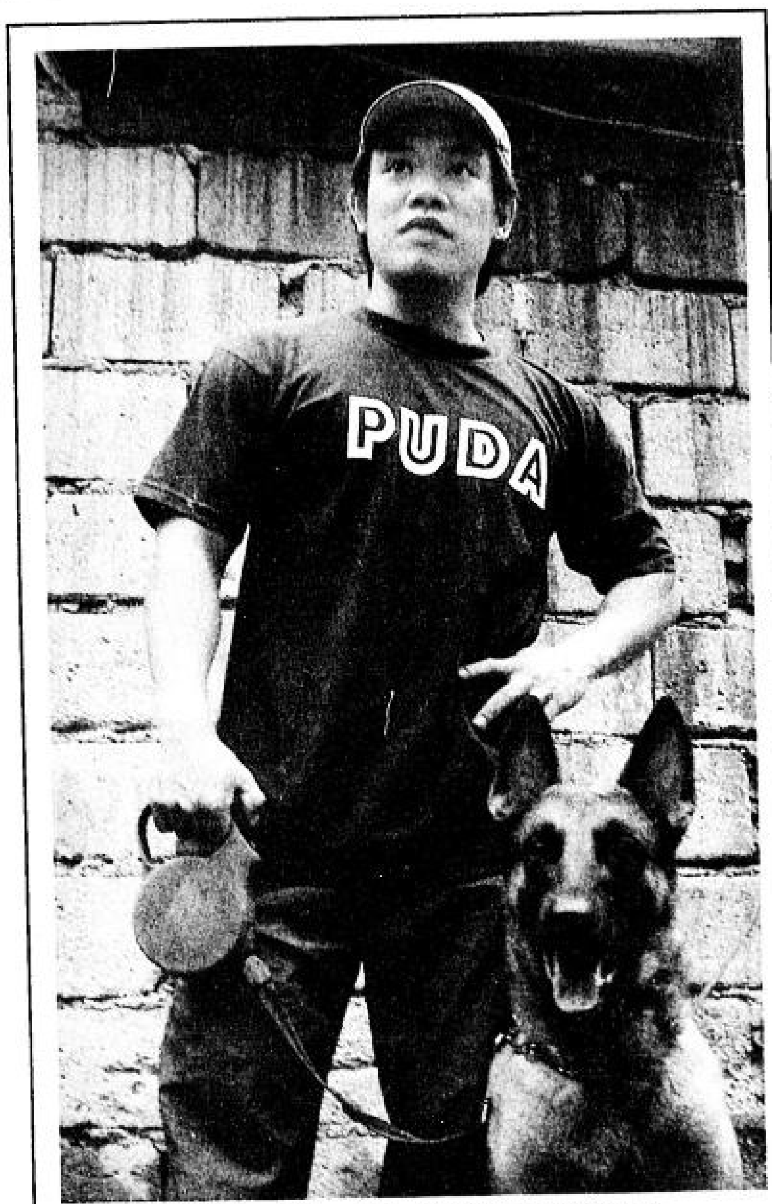


DOG TRAINER Jay Michael Lim: Turning a hobby into a successful business. RODEL ROTONI

Makati businessman is dog's best friend

By Maricris Irene V. Tamolang
Contributor

TALES OF THE CITY

YOU MIGHT SAY THAT JAY Michael Lim's business is, literally, going to the dogs.

Lim, 27, is a business administration graduate, major in entrepreneurship, of the Colegio de San Juan de Letran. He trains protection dogs for a living.

The business-minded Lim, however, is not solely into dog training for the money. "My job is more of a passion now," he told the INQUIRER. "If not for money, what else would others do it for?"

A full-time trainer since last year, Lim is the head of the Genesis K9 training center.

TV show started it all

His interest in dogs began in 2002 after watching an episode of the now defunct "Pets Unlimited" show on Channel 5. The show featured pitbulls trained by Noel Austria, owner of the Spratly K9 training center in Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati.

Austria is also the founder of the Philippine Utility Dog Association (Puda), the first and only organization in the country that certifies dogs that pass its protection dog trials.

After the show, Lim said he contacted Austria to ask if he could train his dog, Sauron, a pitbull.

From being an observer on the sidelines, however, Lim gradually began to take a more active interest in the business.

When Austria left last year for the US, he turned over the business to Lim who changed the name of the training center from Spratly K9 to Genesis K9.

Lim is the owner of seven dogs of different breeds. It takes him four hours just to feed and groom his pets. Ever the meticulous owner, he brings them to the veterinarian for regular checkups.

Skilled trainer

Lim takes pride in being the handler of Mulatto, a dog with a Puda trial title. "Mulatto is the first Belgian Malinoi which placed first in the first Puda nationals in December 2003," he said.

His dog, Sauron, which now has a new owner, is the only pitbull that placed first in the trials held in October and November 2003 and second in the national competition against imported dog breeds like Malinois and German Shepherds.

Puda trials are divided into three categories: Sport Dog, Reality and Obedience. Dogs of all breed can join the trials provided they can perform the required exercises. Those that pass the standard are issued a certificate of title.

The sport dog trial includes exercises to test a canine's obedience, agility and protection skills. The obedience trial includes obedience and agility exercises.

The Puda national championships are held every last quarter of the year. Only dogs that have attained the required average point for the trials that they had competed in are allowed to enter.

"I have already trained various dogs of different breeds," said Lim. Among the dogs were an English bulldog, a Labrador, an Australian Shepherd, pitbulls and a Siberian Husky.

Although he does not prefer any specific breed for protection training, he said that shepherds are easier to train because they learn more quickly. However, he favors pitbulls for their strength and physique.

Pitbulls are also more aggressive compared to other breeds which, Lim said, give them an edge in patrol job training.

Keen observing eye

Lim said aspiring trainers should develop a keen eye for observing a canine's behavior. This would help them read a dog's body language, whether through its eye, tail or other body movements, and predict its response to commands.

"Many dog enthusiasts wish to be a good trainer but only few have the gift for it," he said. Being fond of animals, however, is a good enough start, he added.

Training is also easier when the trainer takes time to bond with his student first.

"Give him treats, words of praise or just pet him," Lim said.

It's a tough job, he admitted. Every now and then, his patience snaps. He feels fortunate, however, that what started as a hobby has become a successful business.

"I feel blessed because everyday expenses come from it now, including my children's tuition," said Lim.

"Dog training is not just a hobby for me anymore. It is now a means of living," he added.

Water rates up this month

By Christine Gaylican

THE METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS AND Sewerage System (MWSS) has approved an upward tariff adjustment of P1.86 per cubic meter for west zone customers being serviced by the Maynilad Water Services Inc.

The new rate will take effect on the second week of January.

For a household consuming an average of 10 to 30 cubic meters a month, the new adjustment will mean an average increase of P18.60 to P55.80.

Since the water company declared bankruptcy in 2004, state-run MWSS has taken over the management of the west zone concession that services 5.6 million customers in Manila and nearby cities.

According to MWSS Deputy Administrator Macra Cruz, the MWSS Board of Trustees has asked Maynilad to publish the new rates in the next 15 days in two major newspapers of national circulation before it can be officially collected.

The new tariff rates to be applied by Maynilad will reflect automatic adjustments for inflation (consumer price index) due to the increase in higher power costs last year.

Maynilad's service area covers all of Manila, except San Andres and Sta. Ana, parts of Quezon City, parts of Makati, Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas, Malabon, Cavite City and some towns in Cavite.

Meanwhile, a coalition of people's organizations under the Water for the People Network has criticized the impending water rate adjustment in Metro Manila as it cited the poor service in several barangays in Bagong Barrio, Caloocan City where residents have no choice but to pay Maynilad even if the utility firm has failed to deliver a single drop of water for more than a year now.

"They continue to pay the minimum charge to Maynilad out of fear of 'disconnection' and in the hope that the company would soon fulfill its obligations," the civic group said in a statement.

The residents of Barangays 142, 144, 146, 149, 153, and 157 have been relying on water rations being provided by the city government.

3 fires hit Manila, Mandaluyong

By Margaux C. Ortiz

OVER P1 MILLION WORTH OF PROPERTY was destroyed when three separate fires ravaged residential areas in the cities of Manila and Mandaluyong yesterday.

FO1 Guillermo Fermalino said firecrackers may have caused the fires that destroyed four houses and around 10 shanties in Tondo, Manila.

Fermalino said the first fire began at 12:10 a.m. on the roof of the Macabante family's two-story house on Dela Cruz St., Hermosa Manuguit, Tondo.

The fire reached the fifth alarm and damaged three other nearby houses, he added.

The fire, which was put out at 1:44 a.m., destroyed P250,000 worth of property.

Another two-hour fire razed shanties on Luzon St., Estero de Magdalena, Tondo, destroying P350,000 worth of property a few minutes after midnight.

There were no reported injuries during the two incidents, Fermalino said.

FO2 Victorio Tablay of the Mandaluyong Fire Department said around 100 families lost their homes during a two-hour fire at 516 Interior 3, Nueve de Pebrero St., Barangay Addition Hills, Mandaluyong City.

The fire began at 11: 48 a.m. and was put out at 2:10 p.m., destroying P1 million worth of belongings.

Tablay said the fire allegedly began when a certain Jun Sebastian forgot to attend to the burning firewood in his mother's kitchen.

DONASYON
PARA SA

YEAR OF THE DOG
Habagat, a show dog, is in his element this year, 2006 being the Year of the Dog in the Chinese calendar. JOAN BONDOC

Never again, vow victims

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Nancy C. Carvajal

TWO BOYS WERE among the numerous firecracker victims who ended up in hospitals in Metro Manila yesterday after they suffered burns during the New Year celebration.

Both vowed never to have anything to do with firecrackers again.

Manny, 12, of Sta. Cruz, Laguna, made the mistake of gathering leftover firecracker powder, according to his mother Zenaida.

The powder exploded when he lit it with embers from his aunt's kitchen stove, burning his face and hair.

"I'm used to collecting leftover firecracker powder during the past New Year celebrations," Manny told the INQUIRER in an interview at the emergency room of the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center (JRRMMC) in Manila.

"I did not know it would explode this time," the boy added with a forlorn look on his face.

Zenaida said she had always warned her only son of the dangers of carelessly handling firecracker powder.

"He did not listen to me and now this has happened," she said, pointing to her son's burnt eyebrows and eyelashes.

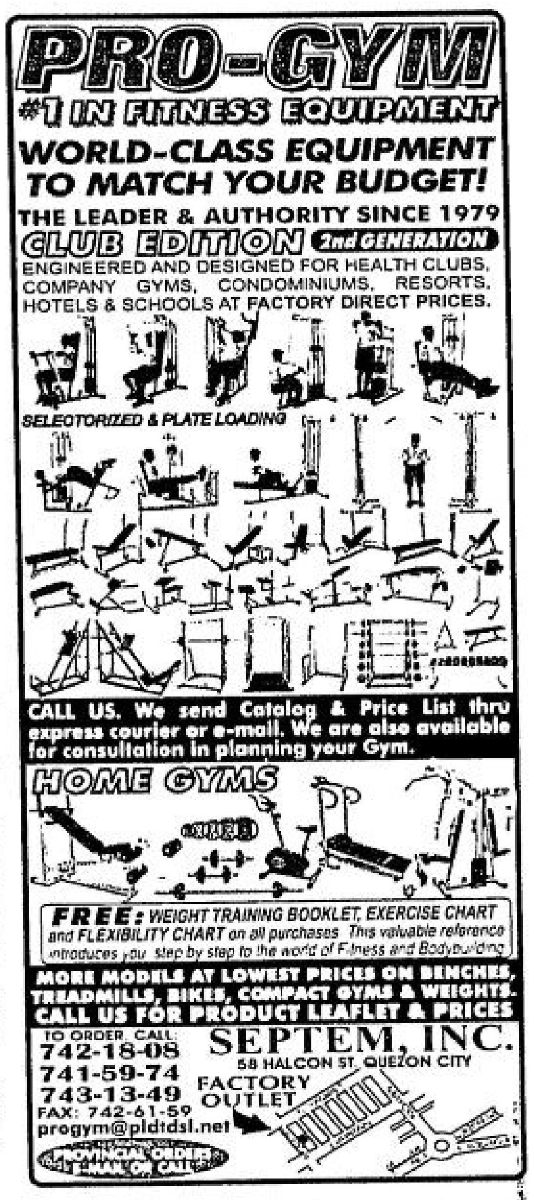
The boy was just one of the 70 victims of firecracker explosions brought to the JRRMMC on the first day of the year.

For Maricel, 39, this was the first time that she bought firecrackers for her 11-year-old son.

But she paid dearly for buying a "super lolo." When the boy light up the firecracker, it exploded and inflicted minor burns on his left arm.

"It was my first time to buy firecrackers and I will never ever buy one again," Maricel said. She was then waiting for doctors to treat her son at the East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City after midnight yesterday.

She added that she did not know that the super *lolo* was "that strong because I specifically told the vendor to give me simple firecrackers," she said.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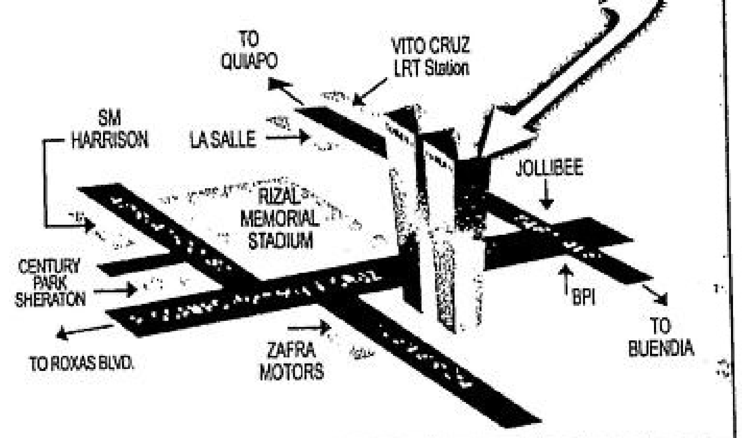

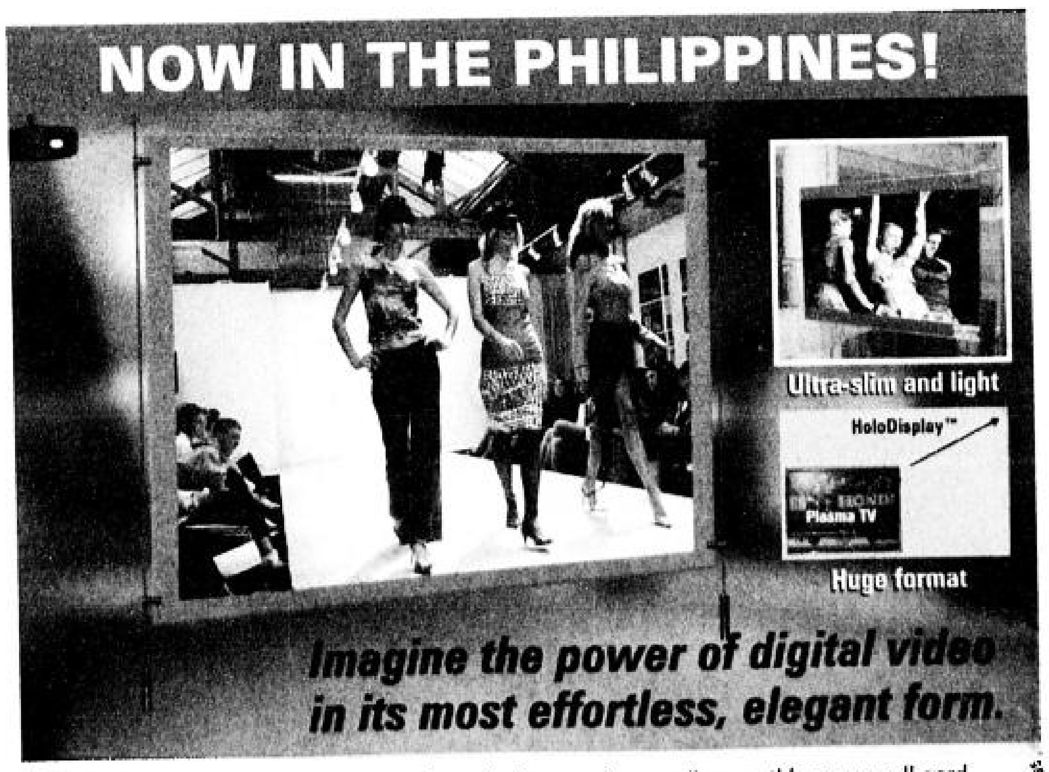

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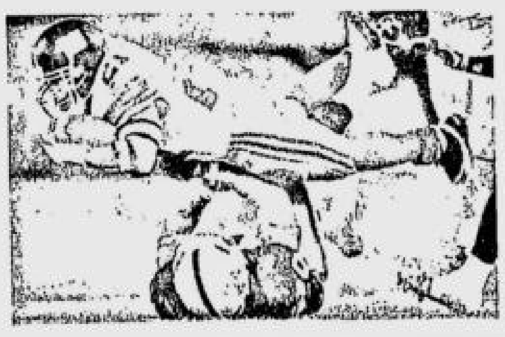

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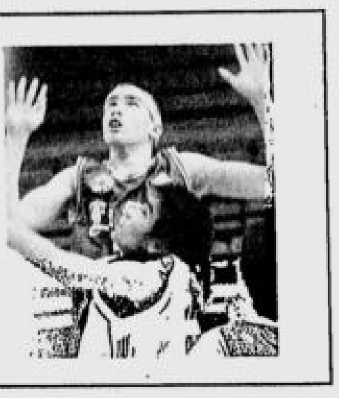
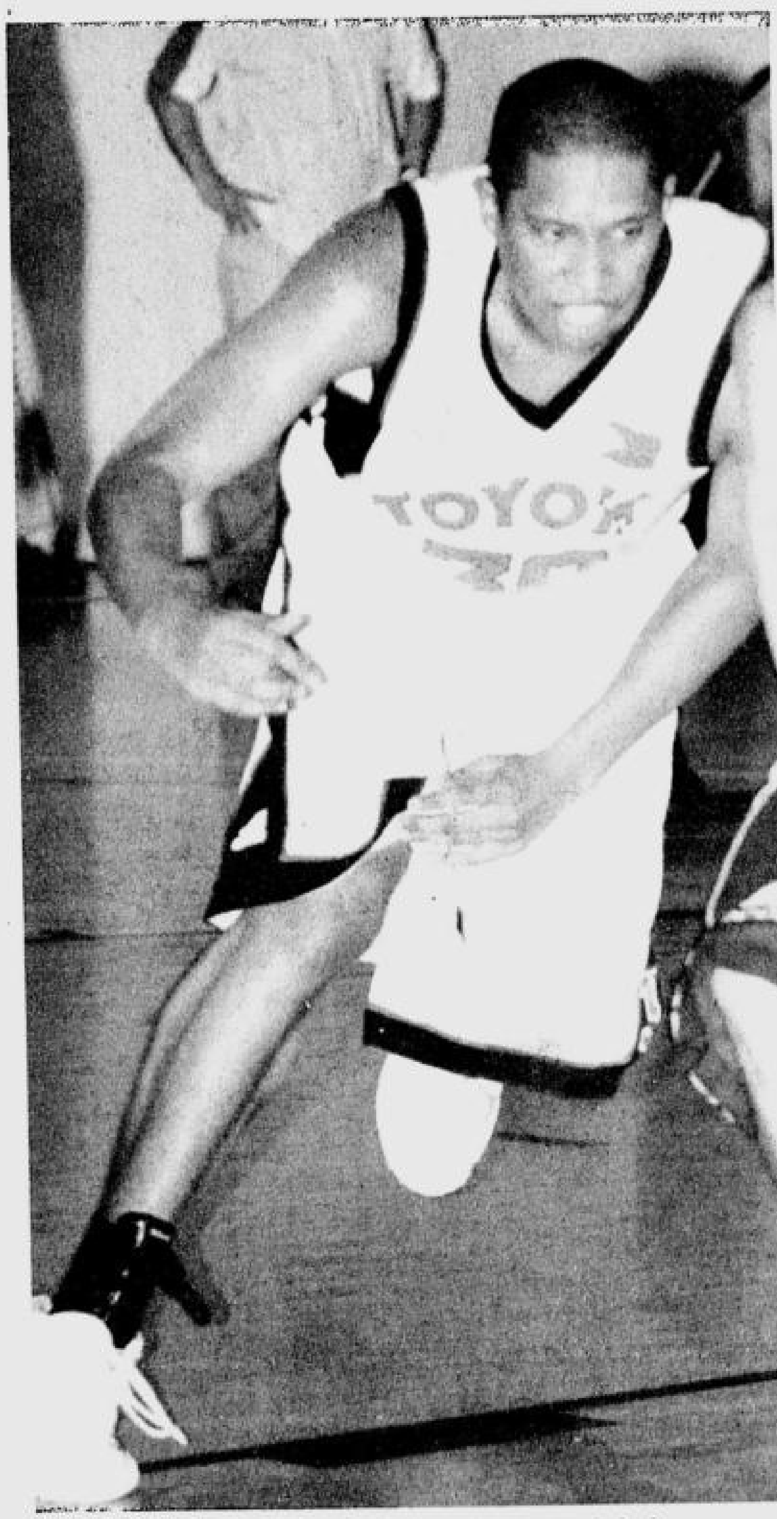


Flashy Fil-Ams rule the roost in PBL wars



JOE DEVANCE: Top rookie pick is ahead in the statistical race. RYAN LIM

By Jasmine W. Payo

EVEN IF THERE'S ONLY A HANDFUL OF THEM, THESE young Filipino-Americans are dominating the Philippine Basketball League (PBL).

Consistently flashing their all-around game, Joe Calvin Devance of cellar-dweller Toyota Otis and Kelly Williams of league-leading Magnolia Ice Cream claimed two of the top three places in the race for the top individual honors in the Heroes Cup which resumes with a double-header on Saturday.

Devance, a product of University of Texas El Paso, grabbed the top spot by ranking third in scoring with 15.7 points per game and second in rebounds with 10 boards per game.

The 6-foot-7 center, this season's No. 1 rookie draft pick, also finished fourth in blocks with 1.6 per game and averaged 1.4 in assists.

Williams, who, just like Devance played for a US NCAA Division I team at Oakland University, took the third spot in the overall statistical race.

The flashy 6-foot-7 forward led the league in rebounds with 11 rpg and normed 11.5 ppg.

The 23-year-old Williams, together with teammate Arwind Santos, were credited for the Wizards' spectacular 7-1 run as the tournament nears the semifinal round.

Stepping up for the local cagers was veteran Jojo Tangkay, who landed second overall after topping the scoring department with a 19.6 point average. Rain or Shine's 6-foot-1 forward also tallied 7 rebounds and 2.3 assists.

Rounding up the top five were two spitfirish guards from Hapee-Philippine Christian U.

Jason Castro averaged a fourth-best 15.1 points and 5.1 rebounds, while Mark Moreno registered 8.4 ppg and led both in assists at 5 apg and steals at 2.6 spg.

Other top performers were Rob Reyes, Harbour Centre's own Fil-Am standout, (7.8 ppg and 9.1 rpg); block shots leader Jay-R Reyes of Rain or Shine (9.4 ppg, 8.1 rpg and 2.4 bpg); Arwind Santos of Magnolia (10.6 ppg and 9.4 rpg); and Far Eastern Insurance's Allan Gamboa (5.4 ppg and 6.3 rpg) and Mark Yee(7.9 ppg and 5.9 ppg).

STANDINGS	W	L
Magnolia	7	1
R or Shine	5	3
G. Goose	5	4
Hapee-PCU	4	4
Montaña	4	4
Harbour	4	5
Far E. Ins.	3	6
Toyota Otis	2	7

GAMES ON JAN. 7
(San Andres Gym)
2 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs Toyota Otis
4 p.m.—Magnolia vs Hapee-PCU

KELLY Williams leads in rebounds. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Paragua now a Super GM, barges into Fide's Top 100

GRANDMASTER MARK PARAGUA yesterday became the first Filipino to breach the 2600 Elo barrier, based on the January 2006 ratings released by the World Chess Federation (Fide).

The 21-year-old Paragua, who hails from Marilao, Bulacan, obtained an Elo rating of 2618—22 up on his rating last month—and barged into the world's top 100, sharing the 99th spot with fellow GMs Suat Atalik of Turkey and Andrei Istratescu of Romania.

The youngest Filipino to earn a GM title at 21, Paragua also ranked ninth in Asia. India's world No. 3 Viswanathan Anand tops the list with an Elo rating of 2792.

In chess circles, a rating of 2600 or better merits an informal "super GM" prefix.

Eugene Torre, Asia's first GM who rose to the apex of his career in 1983, during his world candidates showdown with Hungary's Zoltan Ribli, said he expects Paragua's achievement to inspire more Filipinos to do well on the international scene.

Despite his awe-inspiring victory in the Interzonals in Toluca, Mexico, in 1982, Torre obtained no more than a 2580 rating, his highest ever.

Curiously, the world's No.1 player is the semi-retired Garry Kasparov of Russia who totes an Elo rating of 2812. The former world champion is 11 points clear of Bulgarian GM Veselin Topalov (2801).

PARAGUA: First Filipino to do so.

After Anand at No.3 comes Peter Svidler (2765) of Russia, followed by Levon Aronian (2752) of Armenia.

Rounding off the top 10 are Vladimir Kramnik (2741) of Russia, Peter Leko (2740) of Hungary, Vassily Ivanchuk (2729) of Ukraine, Boris Gelfand of Israel and Ruslan Ponomariov Ukraine (both 2723).

Among the world's top women, Judith Polgar of Hungary still holds sway, registering an Elo of 2711, a mere 11 better than the rating of Teimour Radjabov of Azerbaijan, who leads the boys' under-20 roster.

Paragua is fresh off a fourth-place finish in the Singapore Masters and Challengers International Chess Championships won last week in the Lion City by Chinese GM Ni Hua.

"Mark's accomplishment bodes well for RP chess," said Torre, who is also head of the players' council of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines. "At least a Filipino has reached the elite 2600 group. Hopefully, this will serve as an inspiration for our other players, especially the young ones."

Paragua's longtime benefactor Hector "Chito" Tagaysay, president and CEO of Filway Marketing Inc., said the young GM has done his "share of giving glory to his country."

"It's time to take care of himself and do things he has been longing to do, like continuing his studies," Tagaysay said of his ward, a high school graduate.

Paragua is slated to compete in the tough Aeroflot Open Chess Festival from Feb. 14 to 24 in Moscow, Russia.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

PBA matches improve TV ratings

By June Navarro

THE RESURGENT PHILIPPINE BASketball Association is beginning to make inroads in the fierce battle for television ratings.

In a survey conducted by AGB Nielsen, the league's exclusive television partner, ABC-5, increased its viewership during PBA games in both primetime and regular time slots.

Viewership percentage on primetime in the ongoing San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference improved by 24 percent compared to last season, while off-peak timeslots generated a substantial 56-percent increase.

Non-primetime ratings on weekdays increased by 59 percent while games on Sundays fetched a 60-percent improvement from last conference based on the survey held from Oct. to Nov. 26.

"We owe this latest development to the millions of fans who have been supporting the PBA for years," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala.

Provincial games also surged 52 percent, or a significant increase from 2.2 percent to 3.5 percent of the entire viewership pie on Saturdays.

The PBA is not only enjoying a stunning rise in gate attendance and sales records but also in television viewership as well.

Viewership in the ongoing confer-

PBA/ A20

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James, Cavs bring 'A' game, cool off red-hot Pistons

CLEVELAND—LEBRON James had 30 points, seven rebounds and seven assists as the Cleveland Cavaliers cooled off the red-hot Detroit Pistons, downing them 97-84 in National Basketball Association play on Saturday in Cleveland.

James celebrated his 21st birthday on Friday and followed it up with a strong performance Saturday, also blocking four shots as Cleveland ended Detroit's nine-game winning streak.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 18 points for the Cavaliers, who handed the Pistons just their fourth loss of the season as Detroit fell to 24-4.

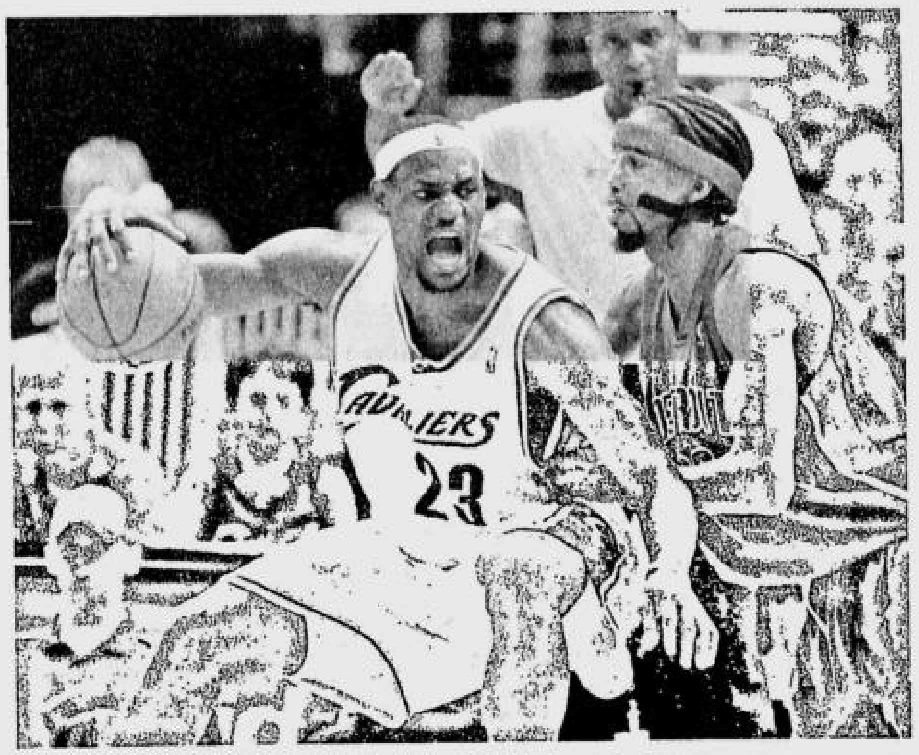
"We knew we had to bring our 'A' game and that's what we did," James told reporters afterwards.

Drew Gooden added 12 points and picked up 13 rebounds for the Cavs and said his team knew the importance of getting a win over the NBA's best team to date.

"That's the best team in the league," Gooden said.

Larry Hughes chipped in with 16 points for the Cavaliers, who are 13-3 at home and have beaten the Pistons at their last three meetings, and at four of the last five, as they try to keep them within sight in the Central Division standings.

The Pistons shot a season-low 36 percent and trailed by 19 points in the first half and by as many as 20 in the third quarter before a late rally made the score a little more respectable.



THERE was no stopping LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers. AP

Cleveland improved to 18-10 with the win, leaving the Cavs six games behind the Pistons in the Central as Detroit continues one of the best starts to a season in NBA history.

Richard Hamilton and Rasheed Wallace both had 21 points to lead the Pistons, who made just four of their 20 3-point attempts.

Ben Wallace hauled down 18 rebounds and scored 11 points for the Pistons, while Chauncey Billups scored 14 points.

In Oklahoma City, Dirk Nowitzki scored 24 points as the Dallas Mavericks got by the New Orleans Hornets, 95-90.

Jason Terry and Josh Howard both added 20 points for the Mavericks, who beat the Hornets for the 16th straight time. David West led the Hornets with 18 points and 10 rebounds.

In Chicago, Shawn Marion scored eight of his 28 points in overtime and Eddie House hit a key 3-pointer to lead the Phoenix Suns over the slumping Bulls, 107-98.

Tied at 92 after regulation, Marion scored the Suns' first six points in overtime. His spinning layup on the right block made it 98-94 and sent the Bulls into a timeout with 2:17 left.

House then made a 3-pointer to make it a seven-point game. And after a layup by Chicago's Ben Gordon, House threw a perfect bounce pass to Marion for a one-handed dunk that made it 103-96 with 43.5 seconds left.

In Houston, Baron Davis scored 23 points and Jason Richardson added 22 to help Golden State hold off the Rockets, 94-89.

Davis also had seven assists and five rebounds and Richardson added six rebounds and five assists for the Warriors, who have won three straight games. Together, the backcourt duo went 6-for-15 from 3-point range.

In Salt Lake City, Andrei Kirilenko converted a three-point play with 18.9 seconds remaining and Utah rallied to defeat Philadelphia, 108-102.

The Jazz blew a 15-point lead and needed to rally from a six-point deficit in the fourth quarter, scoring the final seven points of the game and spoiling Allen Iverson's 37-point night for Philadelphia.

In Denver, Tim Duncan scored 25 points and Manu Ginobili added 20 off the bench in San Antonio's 98-88 win over Denver.

With Ginobili still working his way back from a foot injury, the defending NBA champs now sport the league's best bench. Ginobili played 24 minutes and had his best performance since returning from an eight-game absence on Monday night.

In Seattle, Dahntay Jones made a one-handed 4.3-meter (14-foot) shot with 6.6 seconds left, and the Memphis Grizzlies held off the SuperSonics, 100-96.

In Los Angeles, Ricky Davis scored 20 points, Paul Pierce added 19 and Boston downed the Los Angeles Clippers, 111-92, to snap a six-game road losing streak.

Reuters, AP

HOUSTON Rockets forward Stromile Swift hangs from th

Golf's homecoming produces a year filled with magic, mystique

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA—SOMETHING SPECIAL always seems to happen whenever golf comes home to St. Andrews.

The mystique of the Old Course, where golf has been played for half a millennium, was bound to produce a British Open for the ages. It was to be the final major for Jack Nicklaus, the greatest major champion of them all, and his pose atop the Swilcan Bridge late Friday afternoon became an indelible image.

But from that sun-baked week at St. Andrews emerged so many moments that defined the 2005 season.

Right after the graceful departure of Nicklaus came the defiant return of Tiger Woods. He silenced critics of his swing changes by winning the Masters in a playoff and then dominating the field at St. Andrews to win by five shots, giving him 10 majors in his quest to break Nicklaus' record of 18.

The biggest turnaround belonged to Colin Montgomerie, who whipped the Scottish fans into a flag-waving frenzy on the weekend at St. Andrews. He was the runner-up, his best finish at a major in eight years, and he returned to St. Andrews in October to win the Dunhill Championship. Montgomerie fell as low as No. 83 in the world ranking, but had risen to No. 8 at year's end.

WOODS: Sheer magic at Masters.

Surprising fall

The surprising fall belonged to Ernie Els, who knew his head was not in the game when he went through the motions at St. Andrews. Turns out that was the last tournament he played for the next four months, as the Big Easy took a big spill during a beach getaway on the Mediterranean, tearing ligaments in his left knee.

Michael Campbell won the US Open at Pinehurst No. 2 to finally fulfill his potential, becoming the first player from New Zealand to win a major since Bob Charles at the 1963 British Open.

One year after Phil Mickelson broke through for his first major, he showed he was hungry for more by winning the US PGA Championship at Baltusrol with a flop shot from deep rough that he practiced in his backyard as a boy. This one settled a few feet from the cup for a birdie on the 72nd hole.

The Americans finally found a couple of cups to take home. They won the Presidents Cup when Chris DiMarco made a birdie on the final hole of the final match to beat a strong International team, and they won the Solheim Cup behind 19-year-old Paula Creamer, who predicted a US victory and delivered 3 1/2 points.

Annika Sorenstam won the first two legs of the Grand Slam and again ruled the world of women's golf with 11 victories, although the teenagers slowly began to show that the future is now.

Creamer won a week before finishing high school. Michelle Wie skipped school to announce she was turning pro, signing deals that approached $10 million. Morgan Pressel spent her summer vacation by nearly winning the US Women's Open, and the 17-year-old easily earned her US LPGA card for next year.

Pixie

The biggest star might have been Ai Miyazato, the 20-year-old pixie from Japan who rarely takes a step without four dozen photographers capturing her every move. She won six times on the Japanese tour, then came to America and won LPGA qualifying by a record 12 shots.

For all those feats, however, the year is defined by the convergence of Nicklaus and Woods at the home of golf.

Woods arrived at St. Andrews having already established himself anew at No. 1 in the world, thanks in large part to a chip-in at Augusta National that was sheer magic. Clinging to a one-shot lead over DiMarco, Woods had to pitch to the top of the slope and let it trickle to the hole.

It came off perfectly, the ball making a U-turn at the top of the ridge and slowly heading for the hole. It was losing steam as it approached, hung on the lip for two full seconds to allow the fans to catch their breath, then dramatically dropped for a birdie.

Sheer dominance

There were no such dramatics at St. Andrews, only sheer dominance. Montgomerie challenged him briefly, but the 29-year-old Woods never lost the lead, or control of the championship.

"I've been criticized for the last couple of years. 'Why would I change my game?' This is why," Woods said. "First, second and first in the last three majors. That's why."

Nicklaus loves the Old Course so much that he decided to make it his final major. The 65-year-old Golden Bear is not one for ceremony, but he indulged thousands of fans who gathered around the 18th hole to witness history at the home of golf. They crammed onto rooftops and balconies, pressed their noses against windows and stood on their toes to see the greatest major champion of them all cross the Swilcan Bridge one last time. *AP*

DENT AP

Hopman Cup: US advances

PERTH, AUSTRALIA—LISA RAYmond and Taylor Dent of the United States beat Serbia and Montenegro's Ana Ivanovic and Novak Djokovic, 7-6 (3), 6-2, in their deciding mixed doubles match Sunday at the Hopman Cup.

Earlier at the mixed teams tennis tournament at the Burswood Dome, Ivanovic beat Raymond in women's singles, 6-2, 6-4, and Dent evened the match for the Americans with a 6-1, 6-4 win over Djokovic.

The United States is the most successful country at the tournament, having won the title three times.

The big-serving Dent and doubles specialist Raymond trailed 4-2 in the opening set before coming back to win the tiebreaker.

"They got off to a fast start, but we just had to hang in there," said Raymond.

The Americans pulled away in the second set, breaking Ivanovic's service in the final game. Dent set up triple match point with a deft crosscourt drop volley, and the Americans won the match two points later when Djokovic put an attempted return into the net.

Ivanovic said she and Djokovic should have converted their early lead into a first-set win.

"This was our first time playing mixed doubles," Ivanovic said. "They just played too good. We had some chances in the first set and didn't use it."

Meanwhile, Wayne Arthurs pulled out of the Australian team due to a right calf muscle tear. He incurred the injury in Australia's 2-1 loss to Germany on Saturday.

Todd Reid will replace Arthurs, and since Reid is ranked below Arthurs in singles, Australia will remain eligible for the championship title. *AP*

Doubles also on Hingis' schedule

GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA—RUSSIAN-born Tatiana Golovin of France has found a willing doubles partner at the Australian women's hardcourt tennis championships—comeback player Martina Hingis.

Golovin, 17, will partner Hingis in doubles and take on Australia's Nicole Pratt in singles on Monday. Hingis will also play singles Monday, facing 63rd-ranked Maria Vento-Kabchi of Venezuela in her return to competitive tennis at Royal Pines.

Hingis, who has been off the circuit for three years due to recurring foot injuries, approached Golovin on Friday and asked whether she wanted to play doubles with her.

"She said 'do you want to play?' and I said 'of course'," Golovin said. "Who doesn't want to play with Martina?

"I just feel very lucky. We're all very happy to have her back."

The 25-year-old Hingis, winner of five Grand Slam singles titles, is one of the most successful doubles players as well, claiming nine Grand Slam titles, including four Australian Opens.

She is one of only four women to win all four doubles majors in one year—in 1998.

In first-round singles play Sunday, players from the Czech Republic won three matches, including Lucie Safarova's upset victory over sixth-seeded Ai Sugiyama of Japan.

Safarova beat Sugiyama, 6-1, 6-2, seventh-seeded Klara Koukalova defeated Meghann Shaughnessy of the United States, 6-4, 6-4, and Iveta Benesova downed Australian wild card Sophie Ferguson, 7-5, 6-2.

Meanwhile, in Auckland, New Zealand, Slovakia's Daniela Hantuchova headlines one of the strongest fields ever assembled for the Auckland Women's Tennis Classic, which starts and serves as a tune-up for the Australian Open.

For only the second time in the tournament's 21-year history, the field includes three top-20 players, headed by Russia's Nadia Petrova at number nine, Hantuchova at 15 and Petrova's compatriot Elena Likhovtseva at number 17.

Hantuchova, a former world number five, regained her form last year after struggling for 18 months with weight problems and personal difficulties, and has been the center of attention since arriving here.

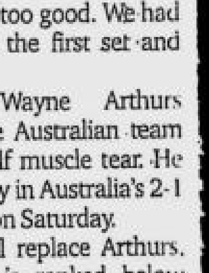
She said the intense media glare would not distract her from her ultimate goal—a final showdown with Petrova.

"It's just all part of it. I don't allow it to affect me, to turn it into pressure," said Hantuchova, who will face unheralded Ukrainian Yulia Beygelzimer in the first round.

AP, AFP

Quietly saving the best o

BARE EYE



Recah Trinidad

YOUNG ARTIST RONALD BOHLANDER, visiting again from Dusseldorf, Germany, fretted on the holiday table, wondering.

His ears didn't ring or hurt from all the varied, multi-colored explosions. No soot, unlike last year, in his German nostrils.

The pyrotechnics were there, okay. But there seemed to be a shortage of ammunition.

It's strange. The biggest year for the Pinoy athlete was sent off with what would go down as the shortest, lightest New Year revelry here in years.

The skies lit up, as usual. But in most areas of the metropolis, glorious, colorful fireworks would expire before they could peak to perfect carnival madness.

* * *

Base guitarist Emman Diaz surmised that the varied New Year's Eve explosions lasted only 30 minutes.

"Mga alas dose medya, ubos, tapos na (By half past 12 midnight, it was over)," he said yesterday.

Most of the inner streets appeared intact, unlike before when they would get mangled, reduced to a pitiful mess the morning after.

So why a short, relatively light celebration when this was the right time to scream and pour it all out?

This was no way to celebrate the overall victory of Team Philippines in the last Southeast Asian Games, whose gold medalists were treated by an overwhelmed government and its First Gentleman to a splurging holiday at the Hong Kong Disneyland.

* * *

Why? Who would dare venture an educated guess?

Out there in California, Manny Pacquiao turned 27 on Dec. 17 at the Wild Card Gym in Hollywood, away from his family.

For the holidays, the sweetest moments were only phone calls, loving words from his wife and kids in GenSan, as he opted to stay in camp.

Don't dare ask Pacquiao why he's making this terrible sacrifice.

Everybody knows he's preparing for the biggest fight of his life.

Pacquiao, RP national sports treasure, is fighting a full-scale, there's-no-tomorrow war against Mexican boxing legend Erik Morales, who had previously gored, bloodied and beaten him.

* * *

In Manila, Butch Ramirez, head of the Philippine Sports Commission, bared they are setting up a national sports institute which should hasten the search for future gold medalists, not on-

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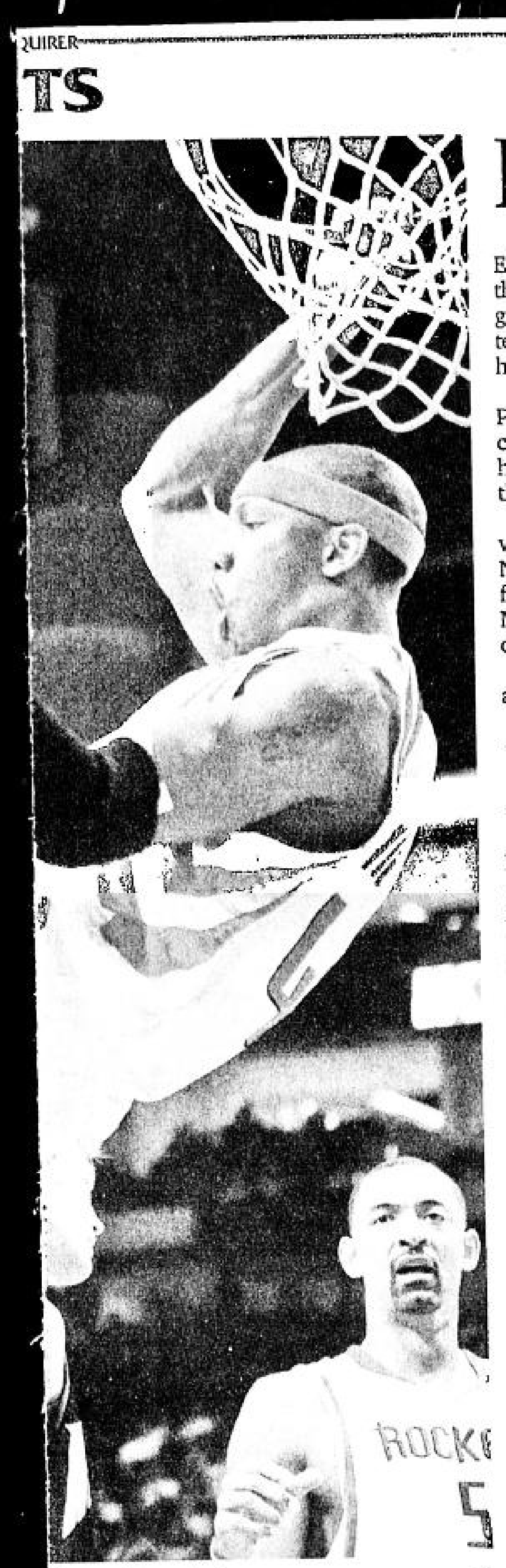


: hoop after a dunk. AP

Kobe's absence opens door for rookie

EL SEGUNDO, CALIFORNIA—THROUGH the first three months of the season, Lakers guard Von Wafer has garnered as much attention for his card playing as anything he has done on an NBA court.

There was nothing subtle about coach Phil Jackson's decision to give Wafer a copy of "Poker for Dummies" when he handed out books to the Lakers players on their six-game road trip last month.

Yet Wafer might have emerged with a winning hand from Friday's news that the NBA suspended Kobe Bryant two games for a flagrant foul on Memphis guard Mike Miller in the fourth quarter Wednesday night.

There is a strong possibility that Wafer, a second-round draft pick who has played all of six games and 19 minutes as a rookie, will start in Bryant's place against the Utah Jazz at Staples Center.

"Von has a lot of game," Jackson said. "He's an aggressive player. Sometimes you've got to harness him a little bit."

The Lakers are down to just 11 available players, three of them rookies, with Bryant suspended.

Wafer returned to the active roster only last week when guard Laron Profit was lost for the season with a ruptured Achilles tendon.

"I just try not to put too much pressure on myself," Wafer said.

Wafer has been described by Jackson as an "unstoppable" scorer in practice. The 20-year-old guard admitted Saturday he might benefit from not having to find his rhythm coming off the bench.

"He has a world of talent," Odom added. "He's a great offensive player."

Jackson surprised even the 20-year-old guard by playing him briefly on Christmas against Miami's Dwyane Wade.

The Lakers suffered a scare when Odom twisted his right ankle driving the lane at the end of practice. Odom and Jackson both believe the 6-foot-10 forward's injury was no cause for concern.

Bryant stayed home with the flu and is not allowed to attend either game for which he has been suspended.

Jackson was asked what would have happened in his playing days if Bryant had delivered an elbow to the chin like he did to Miller.

"That would have instigated a fight," Jackson said. "If you did something like that, it definitely meant that you weren't playing the person as a basketball player, you were out there to initiate rough stuff."

Odom said Friday he wanted all five starters to finish in double figures playing without Bryant. Jackson described his players as "licking their chops" thinking about the 30 shots that are now available for the taking.

"I feel like this offense provides a lot of opportunities," center Chris Mihm added, "and we've got a lot of guys that are, in my mind, very underrated offensively and defensively." *New York Times News Service*

Former Nuggets coach keeps new score

DENVER—IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT AT a hospital where miracles are performed with no guarantee against tears, a basketball coach discovered a new way to keep score.

Jeff Bzdelik walked into Children's Hospital in Denver to save his daughter.

He walked out a better coach, a better father, a better man.

"It's a life-changing experience for any parent who has spent a night in that hospital and watched the sun come up," said Bzdelik, whose child was treated in 2005 for a brain tumor that proved to be benign.

"There are faces of children who will always be on my mind. My family was fortunate to walk out of there. A lot of kids don't. Those kids are some of the toughest people I've ever seen. I would watch a kid fall down with every step, then get right back up and try again."

Dream job

On New Year's Eve of 2004, Bzdelik was unemployed, fired from a dream job in the NBA, run off the Nuggets' bench.

On Jan. 1, 2006, there's a healthy daughter for Bzdelik to hug and the best little college basketball team in Colorado to call his own.

Any way you score it, Bzdelik has won.

Courtney Bzdelik, a teenage girl who underwent brain surgery last year and lived to tell about it, taught her father how to embrace the endless possibilities of the next big dream, rather than obsess over what could have been.

"It makes you stop and think every day," said Bzdelik, grinning at the memory of waiting in line for the hospital shower at 4:30 a.m., when the mother of a sick child remarked the scene reminded her of summer camp.

Not an option

"Winning a basketball game? I remember the surgeon telling me, 'I can't afford to have a bad day.' A professional athlete might say, 'Aw, we had an off night.' For the folks at Children's Hospital, that's not an option.

"I can picture the nurses who came into my daughter's room at 3 o'clock in the morning, full of passion. Our surgeon worked harder, put in longer hours, than I ever did in my coaching career. And his job is life or death."

Friends call him Coach Buzz. It's more than a nickname. It's the energy Bzdelik produces.

His intensity is so high voltage, being close to Bzdelik is akin to standing under a power line. You can hear the passion that buzzes through his veins.

Little difference

Red lights. Roses. It made little difference. Coach Buzz was not built to stop for anything.

Down 20 points in the fourth quarter, he would demand a timeout and furiously scribble a play for the Nuggets. He argued with refs like a $400 per hour lawyer. It wore people out.

"Basketball has always been just a part of my life. But it has become a smaller part of my life. Is that good? I don't think it's good; I know it's good. It makes you a better coach," said Bzdelik.

"I'm revealing things that aren't easy. But now there's a human side of me maybe players can see. Instead of the team panicking under stress, we can have a little levity. I told my players the other day, in my 30 years of coaching, I've never had so much fun."

Coming from Bzdelik, it was nothing but the truth.

After being dumped by the Nuggets 28 games into last season, coach Buzz put down roots deeper in Colorado soil.

Down the road from his house, Bzdelik took a job far from the klieg lights of the NBA, filling a distinctly unglamorous position vacant for the second time in two years.

For decades, Air Force Academy basketball has offered two career paths for a coach. There's a hoops protection program, allowing the man on the bench to disappear slowly into anonymity. Or a shrewd winner can trade a rare postseason bid for a quick, one-way ticket out of town.

Best start

So the shocker is the Falcons have fashioned the best start in school history, winning 12 of 13 games, and Bzdelik doesn't appear to be going anywhere.

While perspective might have softened the coach's heart, it didn't turn his competitive streak to apple sauce.

The Falcons won again Saturday. They beat Indiana-Purdue. The score?

Try to measure Bzdelik's smile by numbers on a scoreboard, and you're missing the point. *New York Times News Service*

Badminton takes roller-coaster ride in 2005

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE BEST AND WORST FOR PHILIPPINE badminton in 2005.

After its unprecedented surge in popularity, the sport sank to the depths late this year following a miserable stint in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games where the country only won a total of just one match.

The monumental debacle seemed to put a damper on the sport's boom, resulting in a lot more vacant courts in badminton centers, where not too long ago people would have to queue up just to make reservations.

The result, although more or less expected considering the world-class status of the SEAG field, also hastened the departure of national head coach Martin Araneta.

But in fairness to Araneta, he not only took on a job nobody wanted but, when he came on board, it was practically impossible to form a competitive team with just a few months left before the Games.

Araneta; who from the start said he would stay only for the duration of the SEA Games, said it's up to the Philippine Badminton Association to choose a new coach.

He said the SEA Games "just confirmed that we are slowly drifting back[wards]" not only behind the traditional superpowers but even behind fast-rising Vietnam.

"You see, it's not surprising to see Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand ruling badminton in the SEAG, but what's shocking is that even Vietnam played better than us," said Araneta.

"We practically crammed to form a team—we need two years at the minimum to prepare ourselves," added Araneta. "In fact there should be a map drawn 4 to 12 years down the road if we are really serious in our pursuit for excellence."

His thoughts were shared by former national training director Errol Chan who called on drastic changes not only in the composition of the team but also in the makeup of the PBA structure presently headed by former First Lady Ming Ramos and former NCRPO chief Edgardo Aglipay.

KENNEVIC Asuncion fails to save the country's SEAG bid. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Chan said there should be definite guidelines to be followed to prevent controversies brought about by "intervention of the parents of the players and even the godparents of the sport itself."

But Chan is confident the SEAG debacle won't leave a permanent damage to the health of badminton, stating that the sport's popularity is based on the fact that the masses can easily play the sport and not on spectator appeal like in the case of boxing and basketball.

"Badminton will continue to feed on the grassroots as it doubles up as a form of physical fitness," he said.

And there lies the hope that from the grassroots will spring a stronger national team.

Yao, Shaq lead all-star balloting

NEW YORK—YAO MING OF THE HOUSTON Rockets and Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers lead the Western Conference, while Shaquille O'Neal of the Miami Heat and LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers lead the Eastern Conference in votes received after the second returns of the 2006 NBA All-Star balloting program.

Through the 2006 NBA All-Star balloting program, NBA fans from around the globe are responsible for voting in the starters for the 55th NBA All-Star Games, which will be played in Houston on Feb. 19. The game will be broadcast live on TNT, Rogers Sportsnet, ESPN Radio and audio in several languages on NBA.com.

Yao leads all players with 1,319,868 votes. Teammate Tracy McGrady leads all Western Conference forwards with 1,066,013 votes, followed by Minnesota Timberwolves' Kevin Garnett (793,078). Bryant (1,213,387) and the Phoenix Suns' Steve Nash (981,623), the 2004-05 NBA Most Valuable Player, lead all Western Conference guards.

O'Neal leads all Eastern Conference players with 1,188,830 votes, followed by James (1,150,920). The Indiana Pacers' Jermaine O'Neal (689,526) is second to James among Eastern Conference forwards. The MVP of the 2005 NBA All-Star Game, Allen Iverson of the Philadelphia 76ers, leads all Eastern Conference guards (1,144,250), followed by the Heat's Dwyane Wade (827,913).

This year's All-Star Balloting partners include T-Mobile, AOL, NBA 2K6, Xbox and retailers GameStop & Electronics Boutique.

Lawrence, Domogan bag Ilusorio Cup trophies

BAGUIO CITY—BILL LAWRENCE AND Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan went home with perfect New Year presents on Friday as they bagged the two coveted trophies of the sixth Nanoy Ilusorio Cup at the Baguio Country Club (BCC).

The ever-smiling Lawrence, the American who considers this cool and windy city as his second home and also a member of the sports and grounds committee of the BCC, scored an impressive 68 to capture the overall low gross crown.

Rep. Domogan used his familiarity of BCC's short but challenging par-61 course to grab the Class A title with his net 64.

"As usual, the Nanoy Cup was a huge success," said BCC general manager Anthony de Leon.

Wilson Sports, Dunlop Slazenger Group, Prudential Guarantee, Eco-Green, Werdenberg International, San Miguel Corp., RizGolf, BPI, Philam-Life, Euro-Swiss, Barrington Carpets and Will Dacna and associates were the sponsors.

Other who made the grade in the different classes were Chang Soo Kang (Class B), Ramon Jacinto (Class C), and Alex Flores (Class D), Nanette Filler (Ladies A), Liza Rondez (Ladies B), and Donna Navarrete (Ladies C).

Bong Mandapat (Class A), Frank Ratcliffe (Claa B), and Dirk Smit (Class C) won in the seniors division. Basti Filler and Luigi Rmairez placed 1-2 in the dependents division while Willie Hernandez was the guest winner.

Pinoy

in the Asian Games but in the lympics as well.

But the guessing game continues on hy there's relative quiet now for the ually noisy Pinoy, not only during the lidays, but also in the case of Paciao who appears to be training in clusion.

Are we finally learning that loudness, oated self-importance, the assorted *a-ek-ek*," bragging and screaming aims of superiority are all empty ads to victory?

The greatest thing our underdog athtes had kept with them, as they venred into the last SEA Games, was a iet heroic heart, strong and deterined.

* * *

Another question: Is the Pinoy saving s noisiest, his loudest scream for the Paciao fight, when there certainly would be ncing in the streets in the event of victo-?

It's not exactly cock-eyed to surmise that a big Pacquiao win in Las Vegas on Jan. 21 could tell on the rate of the peso against the US dollar.

The fight has soared, burned bright to be that grand.

Of course, there's hometown gladness now that Pacquiao has refused to again adopt his previous stance when he claimed he would just run over Morales, whom Pacman thought would be there for the picking.

Out in the corner *sari-sari* (variety) store, a crop-headed boxing diehard assured that Pacquiao should be able to beat and stop Morales either in seven or eight rounds.

Morales is good, sharp, he said, but they will now be using thinner fight gloves, unlike last March.

Mind you, this young man is not alone as he gathers all his fanatic energies preparing for the screaming victory dance.

Countless other Pacquiao fans follow the same line of thinking.

That's a lot of nonsense.

NY Giants cop NFC east division title

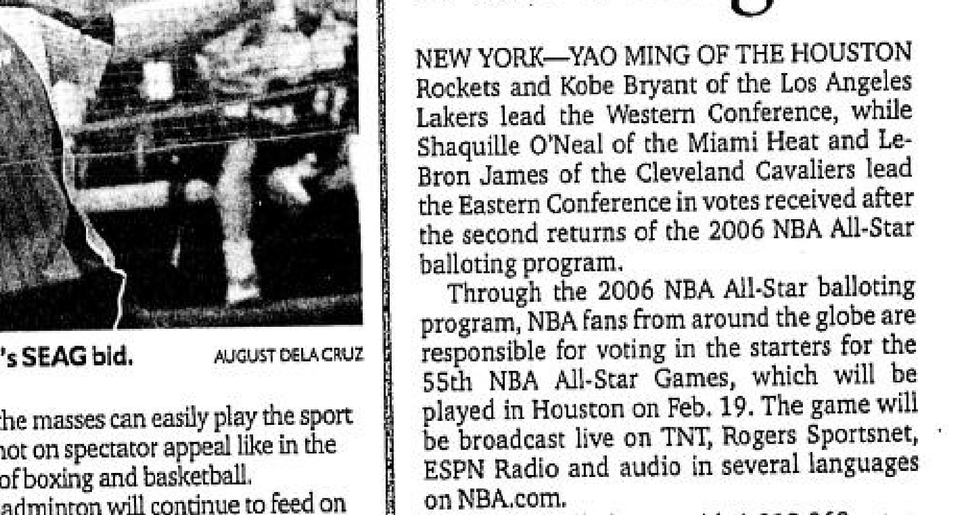
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA—TIKI BARBER ran for 203 yards and a touchdown to spark the New York Giants past Oakland 30-21 here Saturday, clinching a division title and home-field edge in a playoff game next weekend.

The Giants (11-5) won their first NFC East division crown in five years in a National Football League season that saw the deaths of co-owners Wellington Mara and Lawrence Tisch.

"This is very sweet for a lot of reasons," Barber said. "To be able to hand this division title to the Mara family and Tisch family is very special."

The victory ends the division title hopes of the Washington Redskins, who can still capture a playoff berth by defeating Philadelphia on Sunday. A loss and Dallas would replace them in the playoffs by beating visiting St. Louis.

In Saturday's only other American football game, Tatum Bell ran for three touchdowns and the Denver Broncos beat host San Diego 23-7, a victory that kept the Pittsburgh Steelers from clinching a playoff berth.



TIKI Barber (above) plays hero for the New York Giants. AP

The Broncos finished the National Football League season 13-3 with the second seed in the American Conference playoffs behind Indianapolis while the Chargers, previously eliminated from the playoff chase, ended at 9-7. *AFP*

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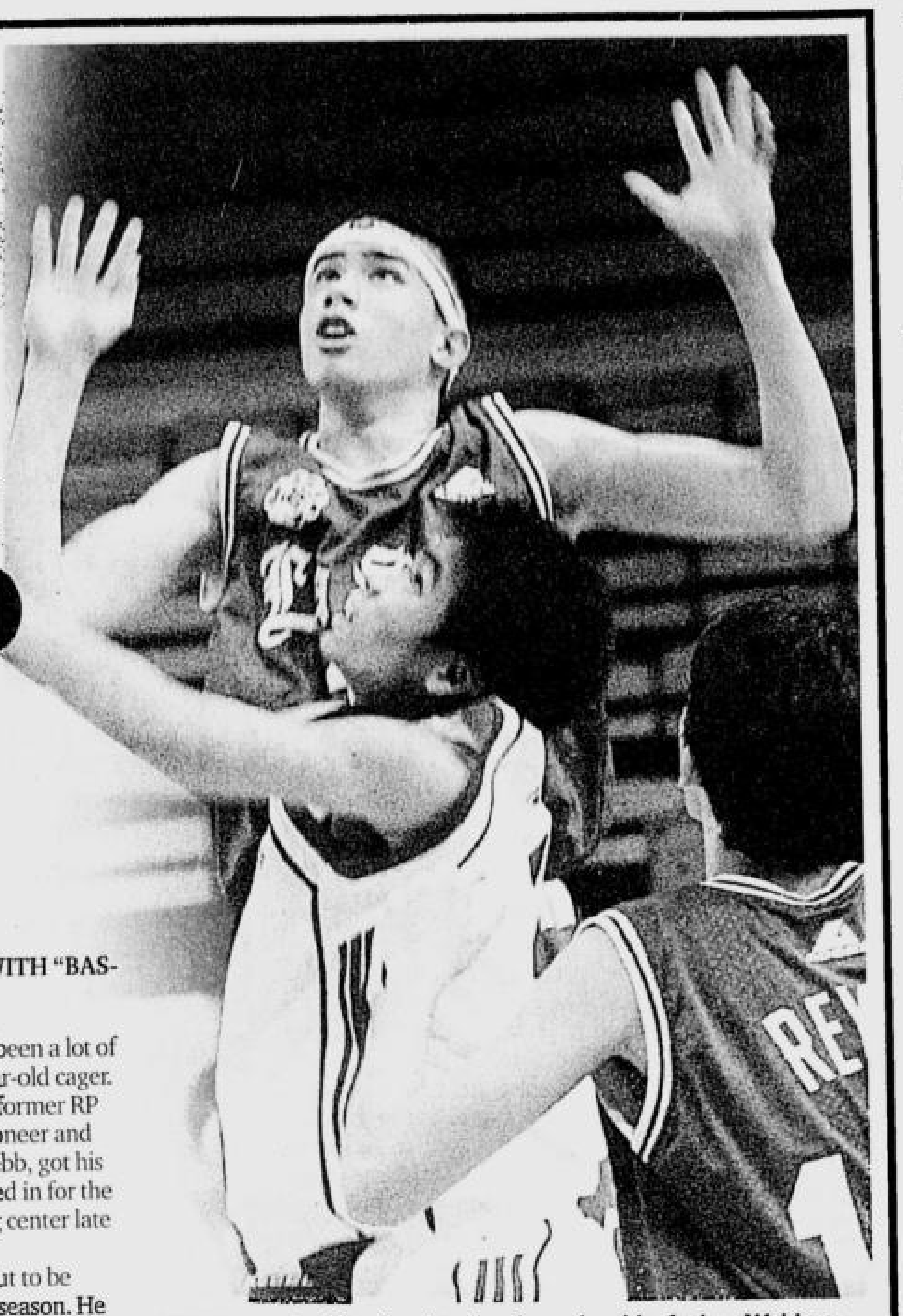
JOSHUA WEBB

Bench warmer comes to the fore



AFTER carrying his school to the championship, Joshua Webb no longer rides the La Salle bench.

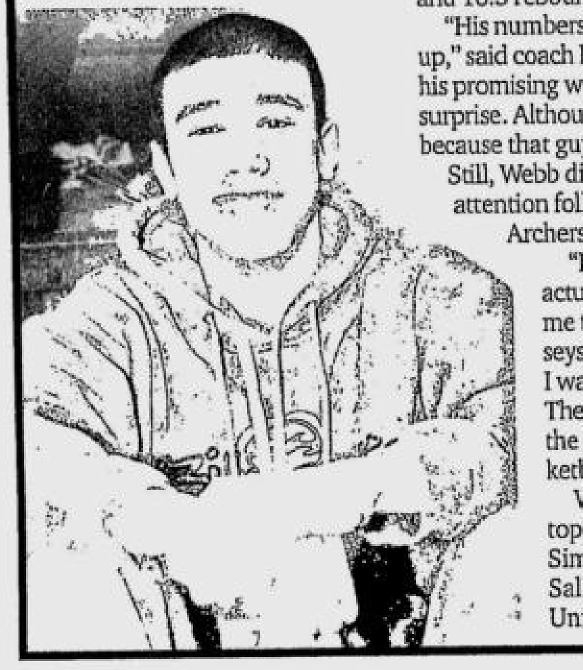
AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By Jasmine W. Payo

HE COMES FROM A FAMILY SUPPOSEDLY BLESSED WITH "BASketball genes."

But save for his family and friends' support, Joshua David Spider Webb admits he isn't drawing much raves for his game.

"I was a bench warmer," said Webb, the sophomore center of the La Salle Zobel Junior Archers. "During my freshman year, I couldn't do much. But I really wanted to help the team, so I promised myself that I would really step up. I wanted to improve myself, to show that I do belong in this team."



Indeed, there have been a lot of changes for the 15-year-old cager.

Webb, grandson of former RP team mainstay, pro pioneer and ex-senator Freddie Webb, got his big break when he filled in for the team's injured starting center late last year.

And 2005 turned out to be Webb's breakthrough season. He powered the Junior Archers to their first UAAP junior basketball championship three months ago, averaging a series-best 19 points and 10.5 rebounds.

"His numbers just kept getting up," said coach Boris Aldeguer of his promising ward. "It was a big surprise. Although I saw it coming because that guy's a workaholic."

Still, Webb didn't expect all the attention following the Junior Archers' historic win.

"In school, people actually came up to me to sign their jerseys," he said. "Before, I was just nothing. They just knew me as the guy who plays basketball."

Webb, along with top junior point guard Simon Atkins, led La Salle in sweeping the University of the Philippines Junior Maroons during the Finals—73-49 in Game 1 and 86-62 in Game 2. It was the school's first title since joining the league in 1986.

"Out of all the teams in Zobel, we're the special team that brought home the crown," said Atkins. "It was a great honor. It was really cool."

"You know the saying that if you work hard for something, you'll get it?" asked Webb. "I realized that it's so true."

Webb was also glad that he made his family proud, especially his grandfather Freddie and dad Fritz.

"My *lolo* (grand dad) always said that I should always be humble," he said, recalling how the older Webb inspired him to work on his game.

"I started in Grade 5, but I was just shooting," said the young Webb. "I joined the varsity for kicks. I had no knowledge about basketball. But when my *lolo* heard about it, he started getting me into it."

And it seems that his father has always envisioned him to star on the hardcourt.

"I named him Spider Webb because I thought it would be a cool jock name," laughed Fritz.

But clearly, Webb has shown the potential to live up to the flashy name.

"He's very young," noted Aldeguer. "There's no reason why he can't improve. He's one guy who doesn't give up. You should wait until he's in fourth year. By then, he must be dunking left and right."

POC chief guest of honor in PSA Awards Night

THE HIGHEST RANKING OFFICIAL credited for the successful staging of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games will be the guest of honor and speaker when the PSA (Philippine Sportswriters Association) fetes the country's biggest sports achievers in 2005 on Jan. 14 the Manila Pavilion.

COJUANGCO: SEAG main man

For the second straight year, Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco will serve as main speaker during the gala rites honoring all those who did their share in making the sporting year a memorable one.

"The sportswriters are honored to have Mr. Cojuangco as guest of honor," said PSA president Jimmy Cantor of Malaya. "I'm sure he would like to spend the evening with the athletes who did us proud in the SEA Games and other international competitions."

Philsoc head

Cojuangco also headed the Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee (Philsoc), the group that handled the staging of the last SEA Games.

And despite limited funding, the Philsoc managed to hold the Games successfully. The biennial meet saw the emergence of Team Philippines as the new sports power in the region.

Team Philippines captured the overall title for the first time since joining the meet in 1977 by winning 113 gold medals, a historic achievement that easily earned for it the PSA Athlete of the Year Award.

According to Cantor, Cojuangco will also assist diver Shiela Mae Perez and a few other athletes in accepting the well-crafted trophy during the award rites sponsored by Red Bull and supported by San Miguel Corp., Philippine Sports Commission and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

Twenty-two athletes, most of them multiple SEA Games gold medal winners, will be recipients of major awards from the country's oldest media group made up of sportswriters from the national newspapers.

Other achievers

Sharing the spotlight with them will be the rest of Filipino SEA Games gold medalists and other athletes who shone in their respective sports, among them pro boxer Manny Pacquiao and golfer Jennifer Rosales.

San Miguel Corp., which donated P100 million to the FG Foundation as part of the athletes' training expenses for the SEA Games, leads the list of entities and individuals who will be given citations during the two-hour rites to be telecast on a delayed basis by NBN Channel 4.

To the Philippine Dragon Boat Federation goes the honor of being named the most outstanding association.

Filipino rowers swept the six gold medals staked in the traditional boat race in the SEA Games.

The list of awardees:

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR—Team Philippines

MAJOR AWARDEES—Alex Pagulayan (billiards), Manny Pacquiao (pro boxing), Arwind Santos (amateur basketball), Eric Menk (pro basketball), Jennifer Rosales (women's golf), Juvic Pagunsan (amateur golf), Harry Tañamor (amateur boxing), Maristela Torres (athletics), Amaya Paz (archery), Miguel Molina (swimming), Sheila Mae Perez (diving), Benjamin Tolentino (rowing), John Baylon (judo), Cecil Mamiit (tennis), Suhod Hakim, (traditional boat racing), Ruperto Aabijon (TBR), Manuel Maya (TBR), Junray Dayumad (TBR), Ricky Sardena (TBR),Rene Catalan (wushu), Sander Severino (chess, paralympics) and Warren Davadilla (pro cycling)

SPECIAL CITATIONS—All Filipino gold medalists in the 23rd SEA Games

CITATIONS—San Miguel Corp., First Gentleman Foundation, grandmaster Mark Paragua, golfer Jayvie Agojo, Manila Sports Council, JVC (Victor Company of Japan), boxer Brian Viloria, former POC President Celso Dayrit, PSC Chair Butch Ramirez, Asian Formula 3, V-League, boxer Boom Boom Bautista, practical shooter Jag Lejano, Eddie Torres, Erlina Pecante, the Philippine Practical Shooting team and equestrianne Toni Leviste.

ANTONIO M. SIDDAYAO AWARD—Wolen Superal, Miguel Tabuena

MOST OUTSTANDING NSA—Philippine Dragon Boat Federation

SPECIAL AWARD—Philippine Paralympics team, Joseph Dumuk

Top riders vie for Hari ng Bisikleta tour slots

THE COUNTRY'S FINEST BIKATHON RIDERS take to the road again on Wednesday and Sunday in Nasugbu, Batangas, to vie for the 72 slots up for grabs in the elimination race of this year's Hari ng Bisikleta 2006 Cycling Tour.

A cash pot of P10 million, including the lion's share of P1 million for the bikathon's individual champion, will be disputed by the qualifiers who will be formed into 12 teams.

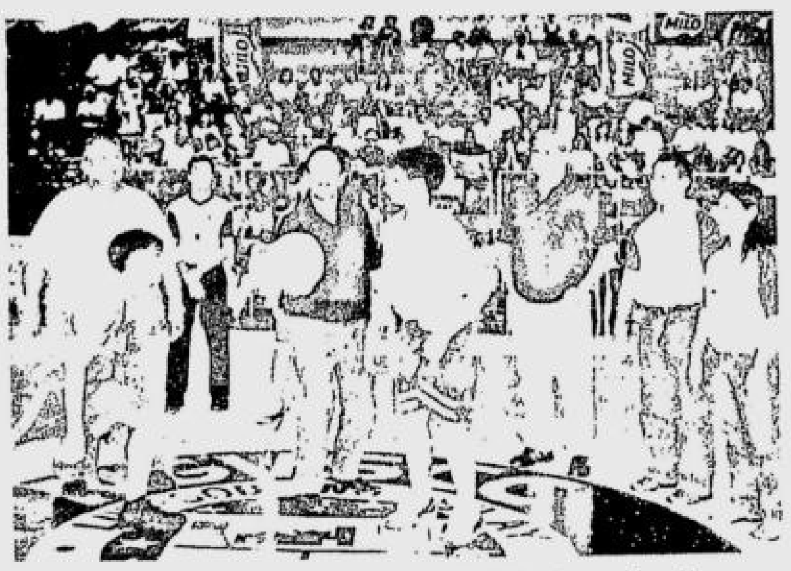
The team that wins the multi-stage Tour gets P1.5 million.

Officials of the Cycling Organizers Association of the Philippines (Coap) said registration for the elimination races is ongoing.

Coap president Julie Nuguid said no more than 200 cyclists will be allowed to compete in the qualifying races. He advised prospective participants to register early.

The first of the two-stage eliminations on Wednesday is a massed-start circuit race in Nasugbu. The second stage on Sunday will be an individual time trial along a hilly, winding route from Nasugbu to Tagaytay City.

For inquiries on the elimination races, call the Coap headquarters at 749-90-57 or 731-57-63.



CEREMONIAL TOSS: Silay City Mayor Carlo V. Gamban makes the ceremonial toss in the recent Small Basketeers Philippines and Passerrelle National Finals organized by the BEST Center and sponsored by Milo last month in Silay City. Looking on are (from left) BEST Center founder Nic Jorge, Philippine Basketball Federation Region IV director Rudy Azcona, Milo Sports executive Pat Goc Ong and Bacolod tourney organizer Joanne Soto Solon. BEST Center is Asia's first scientific school of basketball.

PBA matches . . .

From page A17

ence rose from 3.4 percent to 4.2 percent over the same stretch in the same conference last season, with games featuring crowd-drawer Barangay Ginebra giving the ratings a big boost.

Purefoods Chunkee Giants' quality games and the San Miguel Beermen's astounding climb from the cellar off a five-game win streak also contributed to ABC-5's success in the ratings game.

The matchup between Ginebra's Marc Caguioa and rookie Alex Cabagnot of Sta. Lucia Realty was one of the most watched in the conference.

Other interesting highlights of the survey:

- The current conference is watched by more male audience, a jump of 32 percent, while female share also rose to 23 percent compared to last year's figures during the Gran Matador Cup.
- The 16-24 age bracket recorded the biggest audience growth, logging a 46 percent uptake.
- Next to the 16-24 year bracket, the "below 16-year-old" group recorded a growth of 33 percent.
- Sunday games generally delivered better weekend viewership for all teams compared to Saturday.

Lopez to the rescue

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

I HAVE NOT SEEN MANILA REP. JAIME Lopez in ages, but I was elated to know that he is spearheading a move in Congress to help alleviate the plight of the differently-abled athletes, most of whom have been virtually neglected by supposedly well-meaning sports leaders, including organizers of the just-ended 3rd Asean Para Games.

In the last Para Games, for example, several gold medal winners, like veteran internationalist Adeline Dumapong and Isidro Vidosola, complained that they were not given basic necessities like competition shoes, bags, equipment and a complete set of uniforms.

"I even had to borrow a pair of shoes from a friend," said Minnie Ramos, two-gold medalist in table tennis.

According to my sources, Rep. Lopez, brother of former Philippine Sports Commission chair and Manila mayor Mel Lopez, is keen on helping these athletes with disabilities who won medals in the Paralympics and Asean Games by proposing a bill that will give them lifetime benefits and cash incentives similar to Republic Act 9064.

RA 9064 is the one and only law which provides cash rewards and other incentives for medal winners in the Olympics, Asian Games and Southeast Asian Games. But it does not go far enough because it does not reward achievers in the Paralympics and champions of non-Olympic sports like bowling's four-time World Cup winner Paeng Nepomuceno, billiards icons Efren "Bata" Reyes and Alex Pagulayan, lady golfers Dorothy Delasin and Jennifer Rosales and chess legend Eugene Torre and latest sensation Mark Paragua.

It's about time we rewarded the medal winners of the Paralympics for the sake of equity and fairness. As Philippine Sportswriters Association president Jimmy Cantor of Malaya said, "It is only fitting that we recognize the honor which our differently-abled athletes had given to the country in the recent 3rd Asean Para Games."

Multi-awarded chesser Sander Severino and members of the Philippine team that won 22 gold, 41 silver and 37 bronze medals in the 3rd Asean Para Games, will be cited during the annual PSA Awards Night on Jan. 14 at the Manila Pavilion.

Severino, a FIDE master and former national kiddies champion, emerged the most bemedalled Filipino athlete of the weeklong Asean Paralympic Games.

The Paralympics, as the name implies, is parallel to the Olympic Games. The only difference is that the Para Games for the world's top athletes with a disability is lacking the breathless coverage of the sports media, which is, to put it frankly, very frustrating because the Paralympic athletes are the true Olympians.

Some world and Olympic records set by the Paralympians are comparable with those of able-bodied athletes.

For example, the Paralympic time of 10.72 seconds in the men's 100 meters recorded by Nigerian amputee Ajibola Adoeye is not far behind the Olympic clocking of 9.84 seconds established by Canadian sprinter Donovan Bailey. American vision-impaired swimmer, Tricia Zorn, also came within one, one-hundredth of a second of qualifying for the United States Olympic team while some Paralympic powerlifters have benchpressed over 600 lbs.

In basketball, Australian player Troy Sachs scored 42 points in the gold medal game against Britain at the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta, setting a new Paralympic and Olympic record.

This meet for athletes with a disability—mostly paraplegic ex-servicemen—was launched in 1948 in London by Sir Ludwig Guttmann, the Father of the Paralympics; and a British neurosurgeon at Stoke-Mandeville Hospital in Aylesbury, Britain. Held to coincide with the 1948 London Olympic Games, it was initially called the International Wheelchair Games.

The Paralympic Games are governed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), a counterpart to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Since the Rome Olympic Games in 1960, the Paralympics has grown dramatically.

In the 1964 Tokyo Games, several new Paralympic sports were introduced, including the 60-meter dash, wheelchair slalom, weightlifting and discus throw. In the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, Heidelberg included blind German athletes to compete in several events, setting the stage for their inclusion, while in 1976, amputees and vision-impaired athletes were allowed to join the games in Toronto.

In 1980 in Arnhem, the Netherlands, athletes with cerebral palsy competed for the first time. It was also the year, Sir Ludwig Guttmann died. Barcelona, host city for the 1992 Olympic Games, introduced the first television coverage of the Paralympics, attracting over 1.3 million viewers.

In the United States, where the Paralympic movement is not very popular, organizers of the 1996 Atlanta Games, invited the late actor Christopher Reeve of Superman fame to grace the event. Reeve, who was paralyzed in a horseback riding incident in 1995, had served as an inspiration to millions of persons with disabilities.

ENTERTAINMENT

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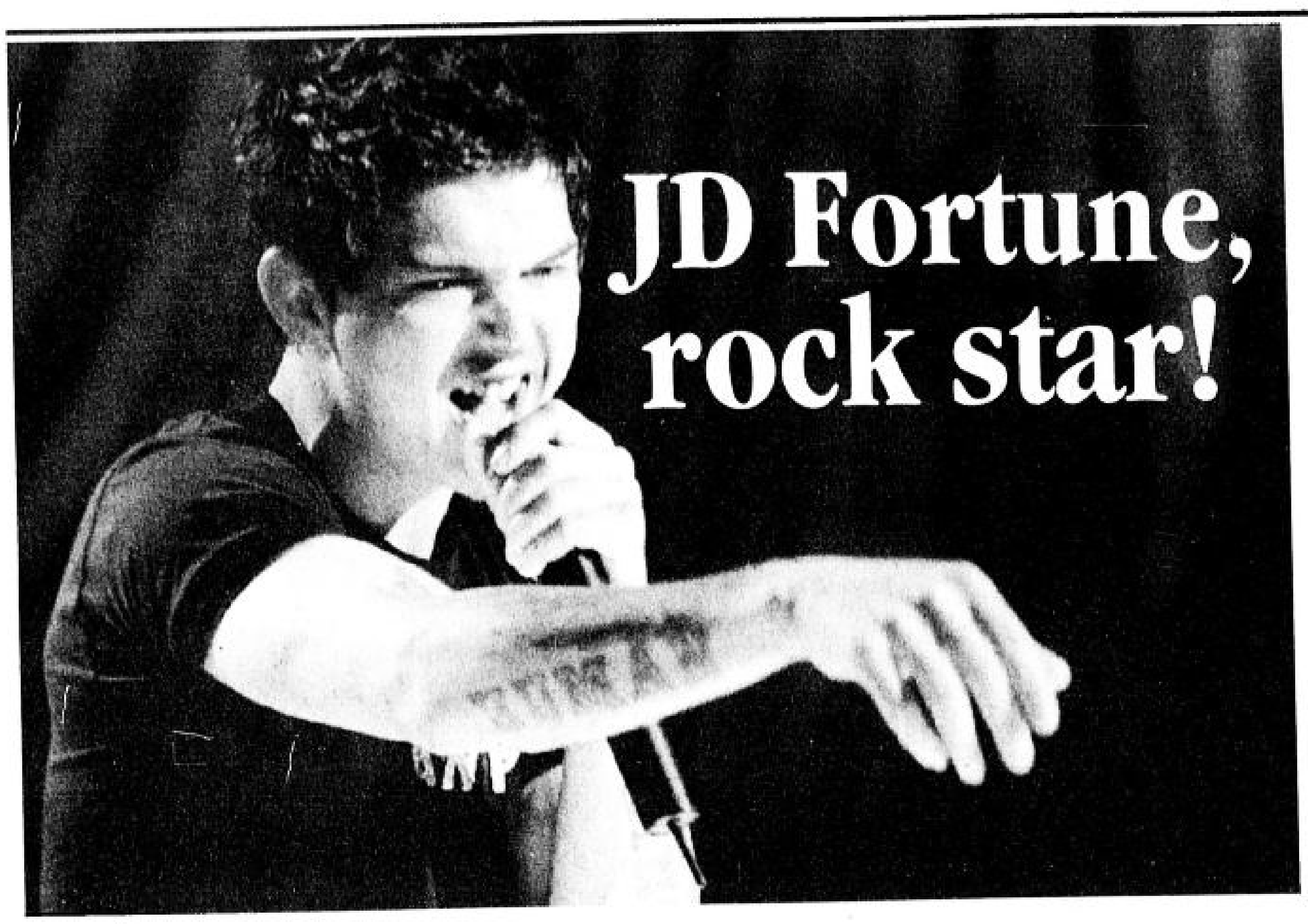
Editor Emmie G. Velarde

JD Fortune, rock star!



INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

INXS' new front man prepares for Manila visit by learning to speak in Filipino

By Fran Katigbak

MAH-GUN-DHANG UH-mahga," JD Fortune greeted us—much to our amusement—in an attempt to speak in Filipino.

The Canadian, who beat an impressive lineup of rockers in the reality TV show "Rock Star: INXS" to become the Aussie band's new front man, began learning the language while prepping himself for the INXS world tour.

The 11-week search ended in September. The tour starts Jan. 18.

JD said Philippine fans can expect the band here in late August or early September.

Currently staying in Sydney, Australia, JD spent the holidays away from his mom and siblings. But he was warmly welcomed into the families of his band mates.

In an exclusive phone interview with INQUIRER Entertainment, the 32-year-old musician talked about quitting smoking, motorbiking with Tim Farriss, and getting mobbed

JD FORTUNE/ A2-3

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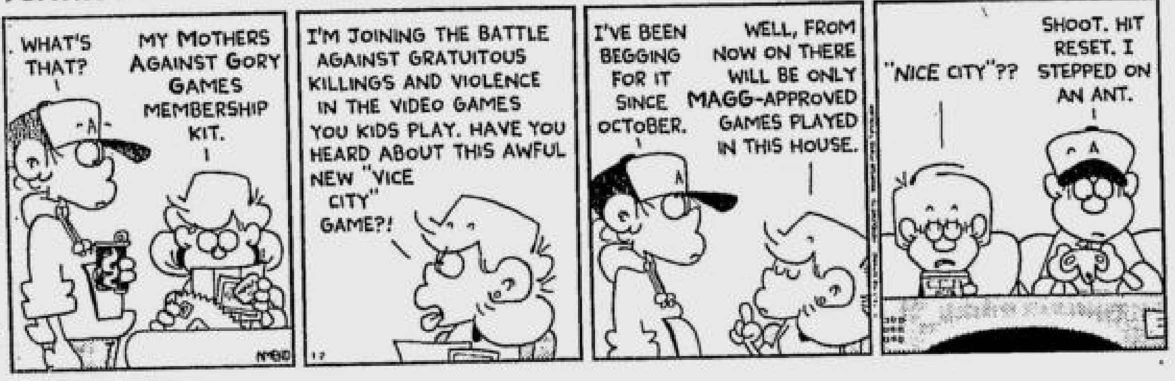
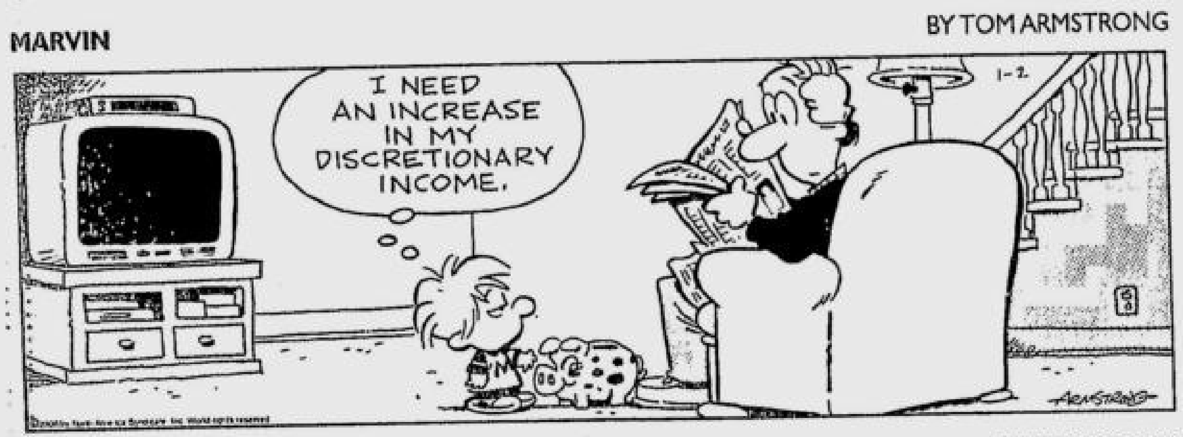
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT'S THAT?
MY MOTHERS AGAINST GORY GAMES MEMBERSHIP KIT.
I'M JOINING THE BATTLE AGAINST GRATUITOUS KILLINGS AND VIOLENCE IN THE VIDEO GAMES YOU KIDS PLAY. HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THIS AWFUL NEW "VICE CITY" GAME?!
I'VE BEEN BEGGING FOR IT SINCE OCTOBER.
WELL, FROM NOW ON THERE WILL BE ONLY MAGG-APPROVED GAMES PLAYED IN THIS HOUSE.
"NICE CITY"??
SHOOT. HIT RESET. I STEPPED ON AN ANT.

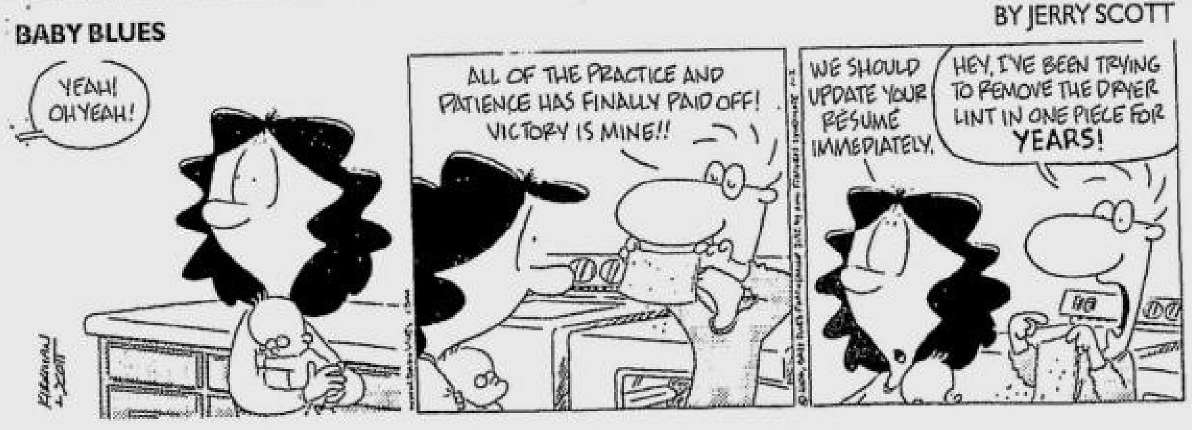
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I NEED AN INCREASE IN MY DISCRETIONARY INCOME.
1-2

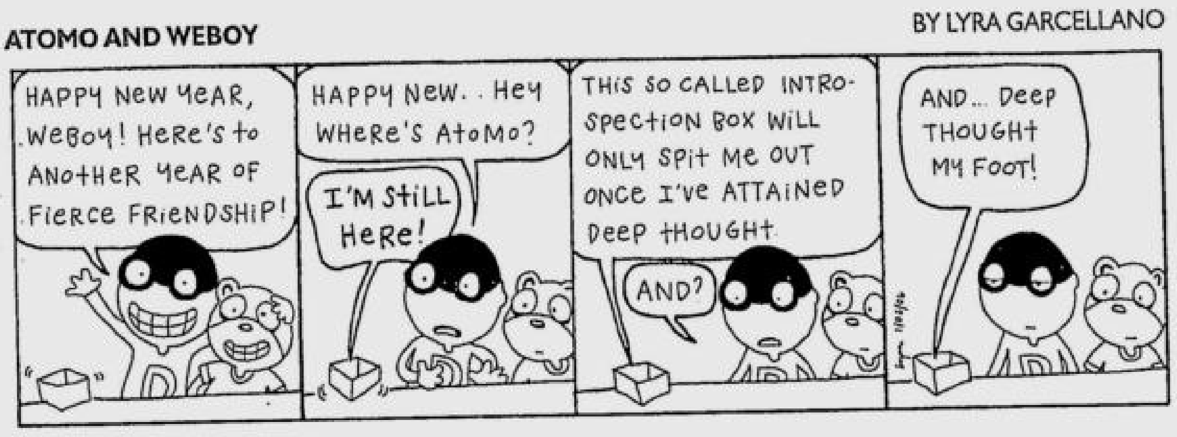
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


YEAH! OH YEAH!
ALL OF THE PRACTICE AND PATIENCE HAS FINALLY PAID OFF! VICTORY IS MINE!!
WE SHOULD UPDATE YOUR RESUME IMMEDIATELY.
HEY, I'VE BEEN TRYING TO REMOVE THE DRYER LINT IN ONE PIECE FOR YEARS!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HAPPY NEW YEAR, WEBOY! HERE'S TO ANOTHER YEAR OF FIERCE FRIENDSHIP!
HAPPY NEW. . HEY WHERE'S ATOMO?
I'M STILL HERE!
THIS SO CALLED INTROSPECTION BOX WILL ONLY SPIT ME OUT ONCE I'VE ATTAINED DEEP THOUGHT
AND?
AND... DEEP THOUGHT MY FOOT!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a fine mind. You appreciate a variety of subjects. You're very dedicated to whatever is important to you. You work well with others, but you set high standards for yourself. You remain youthful well into old age. The year ahead might be one of the best years of your life. Open any door!
Birthdate of: Taye Diggs, actor; Kate Bosworth, actress; Cuba Gooding Jr., actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): It's easy to work with others today. You enjoy group activities. In particular, you appreciate female friends and acquaintances.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): For some reason, people notice you today. You will almost certainly be briefly in the limelight. Discussions with parents and bosses are significant.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You love novelty, and you hate to be bored. Try to do something different and out of the ordinary today. Go someplace you have never been before.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Talk to others about how something should be fairly shared. You might help others see eye to eye about something. (You are the glue that is needed in this situation.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You will likely be involved with friends and partners today. (The Moon is opposite your sign.) Someone wants to tell you exactly where he or she stands on an issue. Listen carefully.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Make an effort to get better organized today. Clean out your car, your purse or under the sink. Tackle little areas that you often ignore. You'll feel good about whatever you accomplish.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a lovely day to enjoy the arts or schmooze with friends. It's also a flirtatious, romantic day. Make sure you have some fun!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Focus your attention on home, family and your domestic environment. Shop for food. Talk to family members. Get rid of garbage, unnecessary boxes and things you don't need.

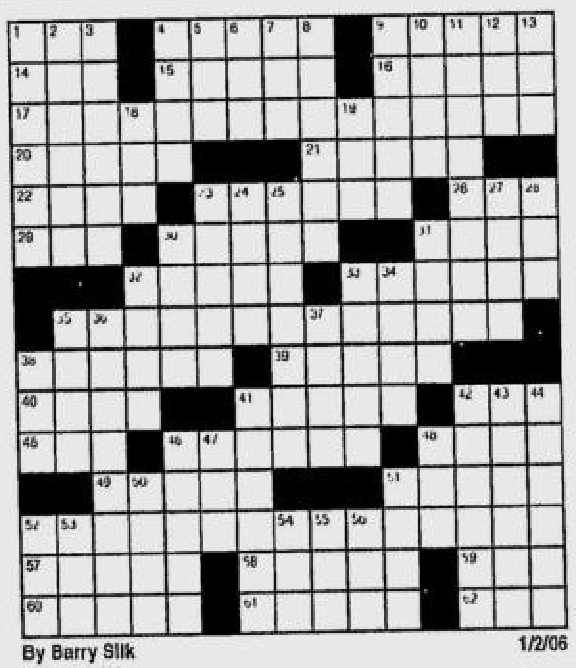
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You'll enjoy the company of others today. You feel social and friendly. Share your ideas about what you want this year to bring.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): If you go shopping today, it's a good time to get things for home and family. It's also good day for food shopping. You're keen to make things more homey where you live.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You feel a bit more emotional than usual, and that's because the Moon is in your sign today. It's nothing you can't handle. In fact, it magnetizes extra good luck to you.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Seek out some solitude today. You need some private thinking time to sort something out. You'll work better behind the scenes or by yourself.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Barry Silk
McLean, VA

1/2/06

ACROSS
1 That proves it!
4 Adjudicate
9 Housing unit
14 One of a D.C. hundred
15 Customary
16 Xenophobe's dread
17 Hop
20 Underway
21 Annoy
22 Thaw
23 Thoroughfare
26 Cut down
29 Time to remember
30 Fencing tools
31 Tropical nut
32 Bridle attachments
33 Stirred up
35 Skip
38 Chevron's 2001 merger partner
39 Devoured
40 Soaks
41 Hatfield's foe
42 Ruin
45 Poetic form
46 Hang around
48 Round number?
49 "Something to Talk About" singer Bonnie
51 Add a lane to, say
52 Jump
57 Porterhouse alternative
58 Modern post
59 Remodeled Clay?
60 Seductress
61 Bonaduce of "The Partridge Family"
62 Born

DOWN
1 Sad news
2 Young cow
3 Luanda's land
4 Equitable
5 Trojans' sch.
6 Boy, am I dumb!
7 Fed. budget group
8 Runs off (with)
9 West Point student
10 Norwegian king
11 Type of golf course
12 12th mo.
13 Quarter of four
18 Wildly popular
19 Grant's foe
23 Richard's Agnew
24 Look after
25 Aretha Franklin hit
27 Grade sch.
28 Rolled dough?
30 Fair-hiring org.
31 Brick oven
32 Some HDTVs
33 Turbine part
34 Abide by
35 Marsh growth
36 Outer surface
37 Strong, fast current
38 Tango team
41 Like British bishops
42 Road divider
43 Cactus surface pit
44 Van Zant of Lynyrd Skynyrd
46 Compare
47 Ex-Giant Mel
48 Pimple
50 Complexion blemish
51 Skillfully deceptive
52 Parts of gals.
53 Where: Lat.
54 Health grp.
55 Tandoori-baked bread
56 Something to confess

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

C	H	A	P	■	C	A	A	N	■	W	R	A	P	S
R	O	S	E	M	A	R	I	E	■	A	U	D	I	O
I	N	T	R	O	V	E	R	T	■	G	I	V	E	R
M	O	R	O	N	S	■	■	■	V	E	N	I	C	E
P	R	O	N	E	■	S	C	O	R	S	E	S	E	■
■	■	■	S	Y	N	C	H	R	O	■	D	A	M	S
A	P	E	■	B	O	R	E	D	O	M	■	B	E	A
S	A	X	■	A	T	A	C	A	M	A	■	L	A	P
A	R	T	■	G	A	W	K	I	E	R	■	E	L	S
P	A	R	T	■	B	L	O	N	D	I	E	■	■	■
■	M	A	R	I	L	Y	N	S	■	N	A	R	C	S
D	E	V	I	N	E	■	■	■	S	A	T	O	R	I
I	D	E	A	S	■	R	E	M	O	D	E	L	E	D
D	I	R	G	E	■	H	A	R	P	E	R	L	E	E
O	C	T	E	T	■	O	U	T	S	■	S	E	P	S

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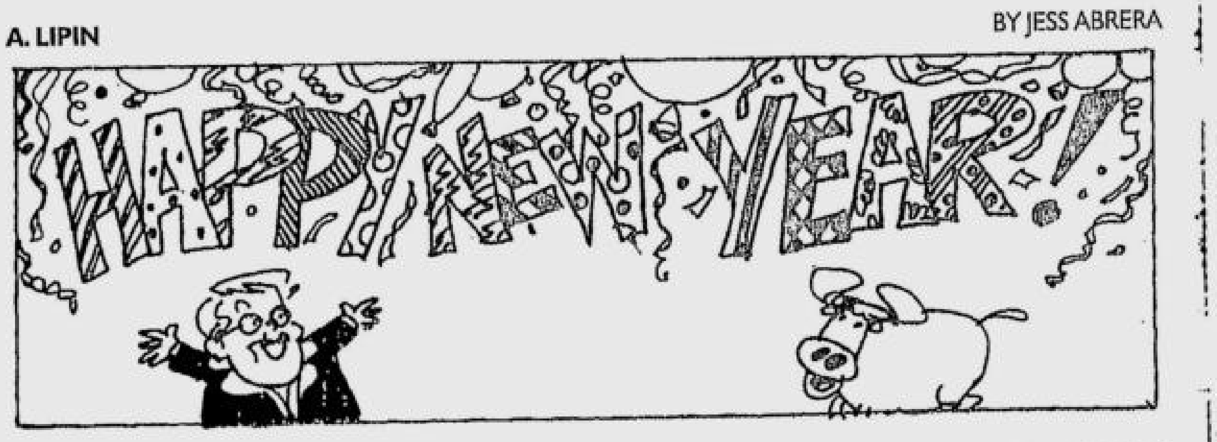
1/2/06

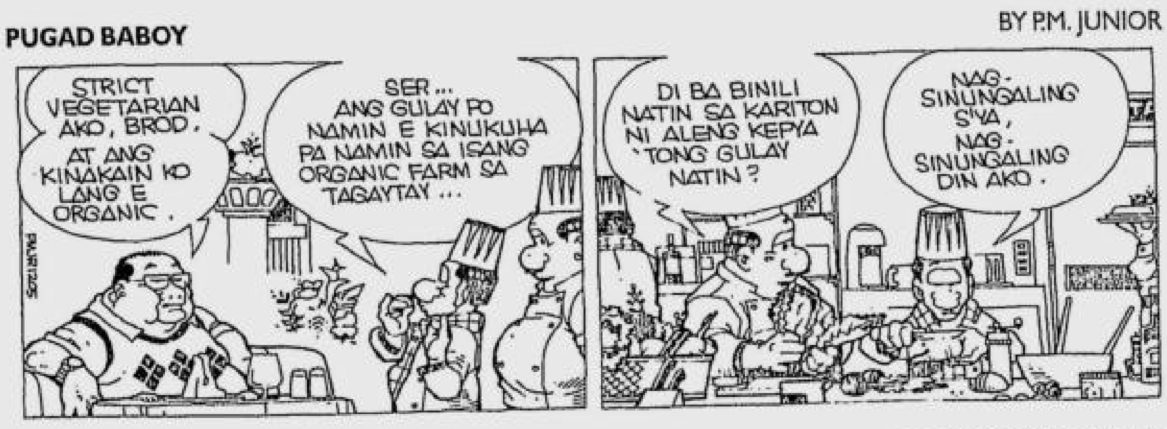
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HAPPY NEW YEAR!

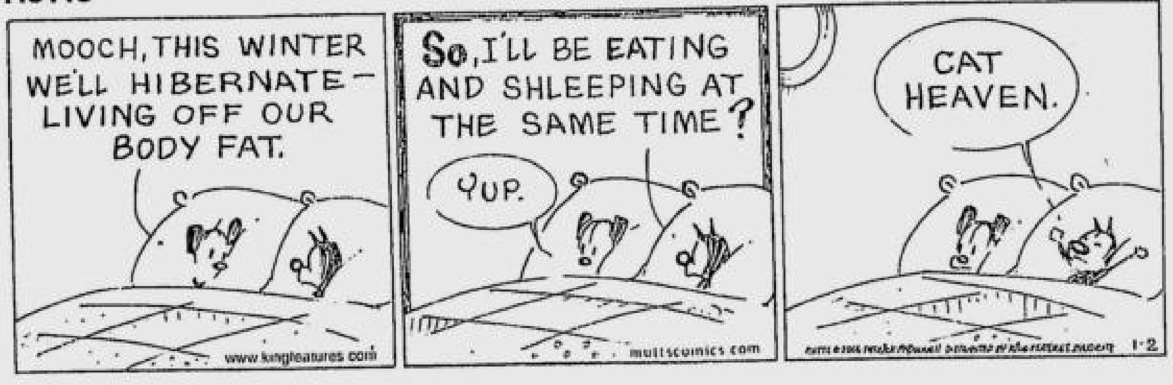
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


STRICT VEGETARIAN AKO, BROD. AT ANG KINAKAIN KO LANG E ORGANIC.
SER... ANG GULAY PO NAMIN E KINUKUHA PA NAMIN SA ISANG ORGANIC FARM SA TAGAYTAY...
DI BA BINILI NATIN SA KARITON NI ALENG KEPYA 'TONG GULAY NATIN?
NAG-SINUNGALING S'YA, NAG-SINUNGALING DIN AKO.

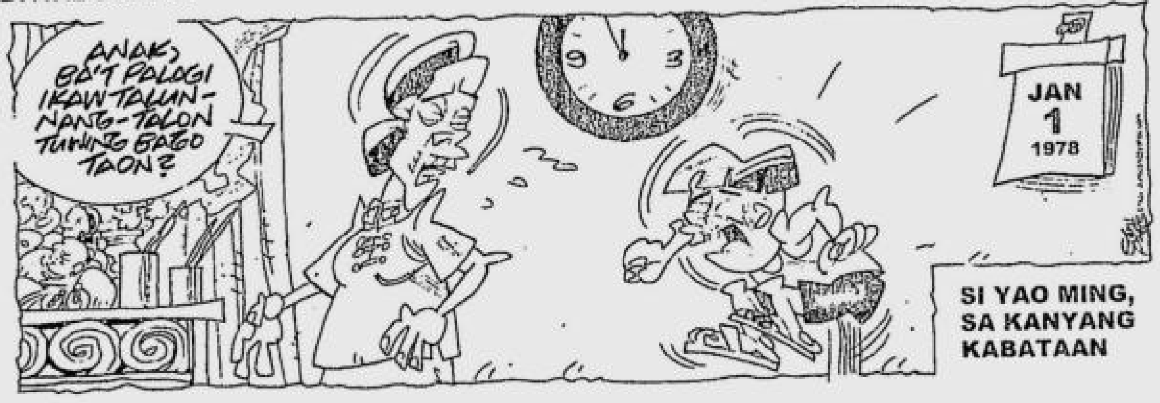
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCH, THIS WINTER WE'LL HIBERNATE— LIVING OFF OUR BODY FAT.
www.kingfeatures.com
SO, I'LL BE EATING AND SHLEEPING AT THE SAME TIME?
YUP.
muttscomics.com
CAT HEAVEN.
1-2

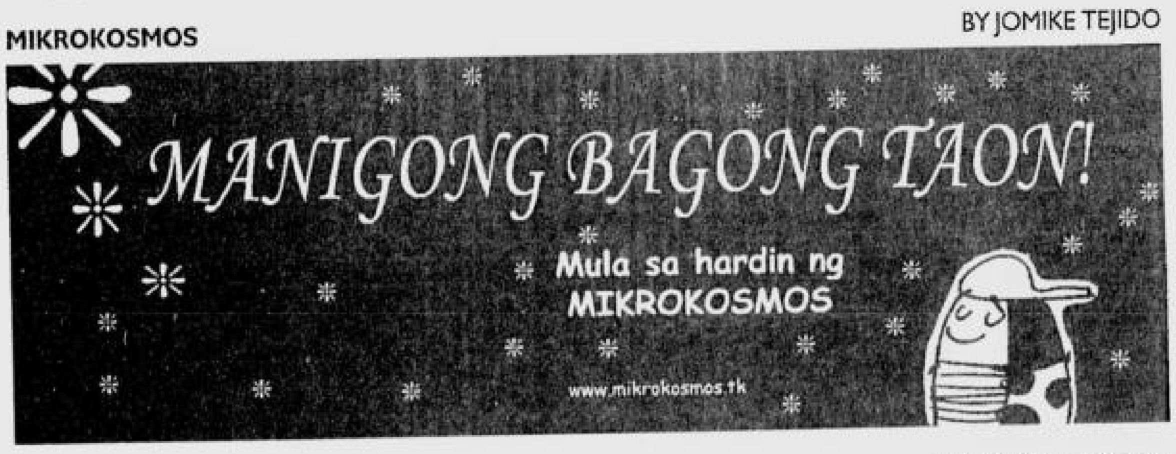
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ANAK, BA'T PALAGI IKAW TALUN-NANG-TALON TUWING BAGO TAON?
JAN 1 1978
SI YAO MING, SA KANYANG KABATAAN

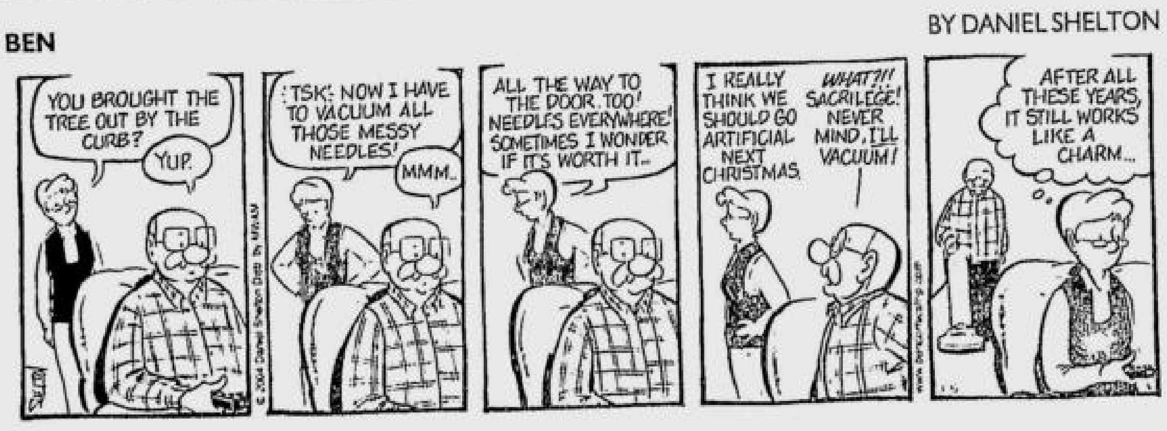
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MANIGONG BAGONG TAON!
Mula sa hardin ng MIKROKOSMOS
www.mikrokosmos.tk

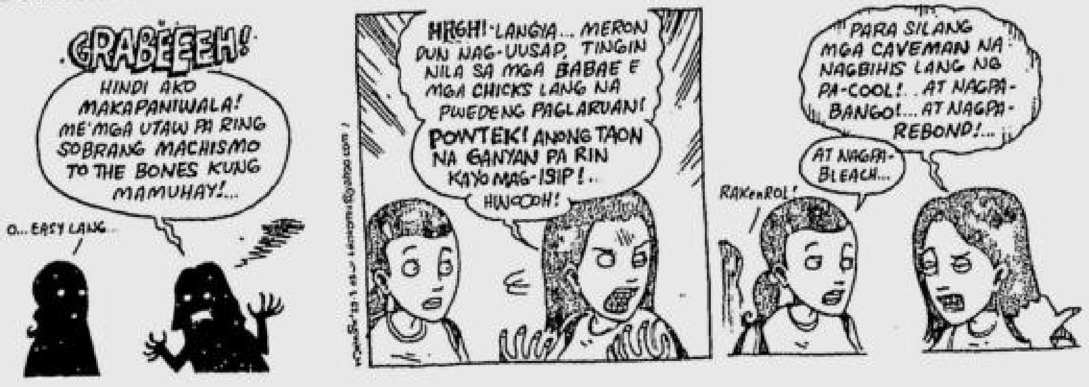
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


YOU BROUGHT THE TREE OUT BY THE CURB?
YUP.
TSK! NOW I HAVE TO VACUUM ALL THOSE MESSY NEEDLES!
MMM..
ALL THE WAY TO THE DOOR, TOO! NEEDLES EVERYWHERE! SOMETIMES I WONDER IF IT'S WORTH IT..
I REALLY THINK WE SHOULD GO ARTIFICIAL NEXT CHRISTMAS.
WHAT?!! SACRILEGE! NEVER MIND, I'LL VACUUM!
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, IT STILL WORKS LIKE A CHARM...

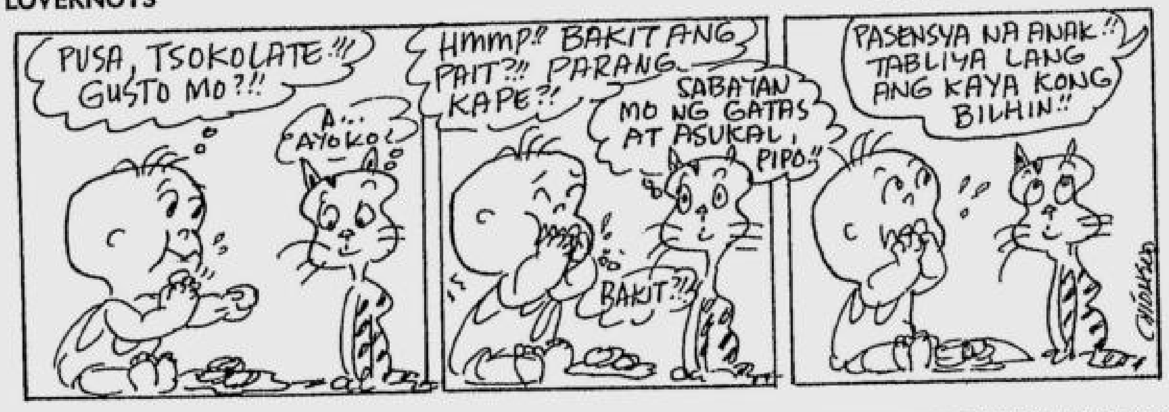
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


GRABEEEH! HINDI AKO MAKAPANIWALA! ME'MGA UTAW PA RING SOBRANG MACHISMO TO THE BONES KUNG MAMUHAY!...
O... EASY LANG..
HRGH! LANGYA... MERON DUN NAG-UUSAP, TINGIN NILA SA MGA BABAE E MGA CHICKS LANG NA PWEDENG PAGLARUAN!
POWTEK! ANONG TAON NA GANYAN PA RIN KAYO MAG-ISIP!..
HINOOOH!
"PARA SILANG MGA CAVEMAN NA NAGBIHIS LANG NG PA-COOL!.. AT NAGPA-BANGO!... AT NAGPA-REBOND!...
AT NAGPA-BLEACH...
RAKENROL!

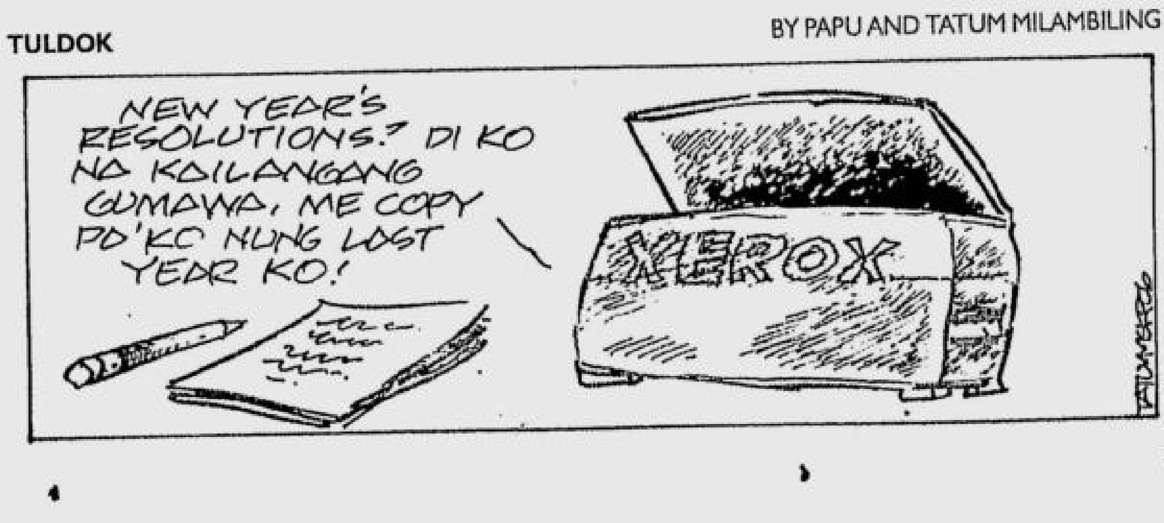
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PUSA, TSOKOLATE!!! GUSTO MO?!!
A... AYOKO!
HMMP!! BAKIT ANG PAIT?!! PARANG KAPE?!
SABAYAN MO NG GATAS AT ASUKAL, PIPO!!
BAKIT?!!
PASENSYA NA ANAK!! TABLIYA LANG ANG KAYA KONG BILHIN!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS? DI KO NA KAILANGANG GUMAWA, ME COPY PO'KO NUNG LAST YEAR KO!
XEROX

JD Fortune, rock star!

From page A2-1

by fans when he went to the mall to buy a toothbrush.

Have you adjusted to the rock star life?

I'm still just living the way I used to. I've wanted to do this since I was five. It just seems like it all fits, it all makes sense, and feels very natural. If you show me somebody who loves what they do, I'll show you somebody who never works a day of their life. I've always been a musician because I just feel music and write music.

Are you finally getting that eight-hour sleep you've been longing for?

I had a good three days when I had nothing to do [but] I made a mistake. I went to a mall and got attacked. There were hundreds of people that were just all over the place wanting pictures and autographs. I got really claustrophobic because I didn't have anybody with me. I had a hat and sunglasses on, but I still got recognized.

You should have known, from the experience of other celebrities.

I know… but I really needed a toothbrush.

Were you harmed during the incident?

Everybody kept their distance, but I did get a few people grabbing my butt and my crotch.

How did you get out of it?

(Laughs) I didn't! I just kept walking. I was actually staying just across the street from the mall [but] I got into a taxicab and went up the street, asked [the driver] to turn around and go back. I didn't want [the mob] to see me taken to the hotel because I didn't want anybody to follow me there.

Did people eventually find out where you were at?

The second night I was in the hotel, about 45 people showed up in the parking lot. The hotel manager called me and said, "It may not be a good idea if you go out right now."

Where do you live now?

I'm in a sort of furnished apartment in a building that overlooks the city. I just go to one place to eat and it's never really busy. I sit in the back and put a newspaper up, have my lunch and tea, and then go back upstairs.

How often do you see your family?

I saw them a couple of months ago and I can't wait to see them in February.

Where are you spending the holidays?

I'm with some of the band members and their families. I'll be in Sydney, Australia, until Jan. 11. I was going to fly my mom out here but she couldn't get off work. I miss her a lot.

Does INXS plan to continue writing songs or is the band focusing on the tour?

We'll be writing on the road. We've already started writing some stuff together. [There were songs] that didn't make it to the record because we didn't get to finish soon enough but we're looking at some songs that we started back in Los Angeles. I've also been writing almost everyday. On the [world] tour, we're mainly concentrating on [new INXS album] "Switch" and songs from the back catalogue.

How long is your contract with INXS?

It's an open contract.

Do you plan to stay with the band after the world tour?

I love INXS. It's my band! I'm not leaving INXS, no, [but] I'd like to write for some people who might not be well-known and give back to them the way life has been so kind to me.

Have you had people come up to you and say there's a bit of resemblance between you and [the late INXS front

JD FORTUNE/ A2-4

SHANG CINEPLEX
① ENTENG KABISOTE 2
MTRCB GP
12.20, 2.45, 5.10, 7:35, 10.00
② MULAWIN THE MOVIE
MTRCB GP
12.00, 2.30, 5.00, 7.30, 10.00
③ AKO LEGAL WIFE
MTRCB PG-13
12.20, 2.45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00
④ BLUE MOON
MTRCB GP
PREMIERE THEATRE (CLOSED)
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice
Catch the Cineplex Special
Watch the 2005 Metro Manila Film Festival starting December 26, 2005 at the Shang Cineplex for only P120.00
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Cinemas 1 to 4 - P150
Premiere Theatre - P295 (includes unlimited popcorn and beverage) (except for blockbuster)
Call 633-7851, loc. 171 or 633-2227 / 633-4735 for more details.
Shangri-La Plaza

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GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA
THEATRE MALL
GREENHILLS
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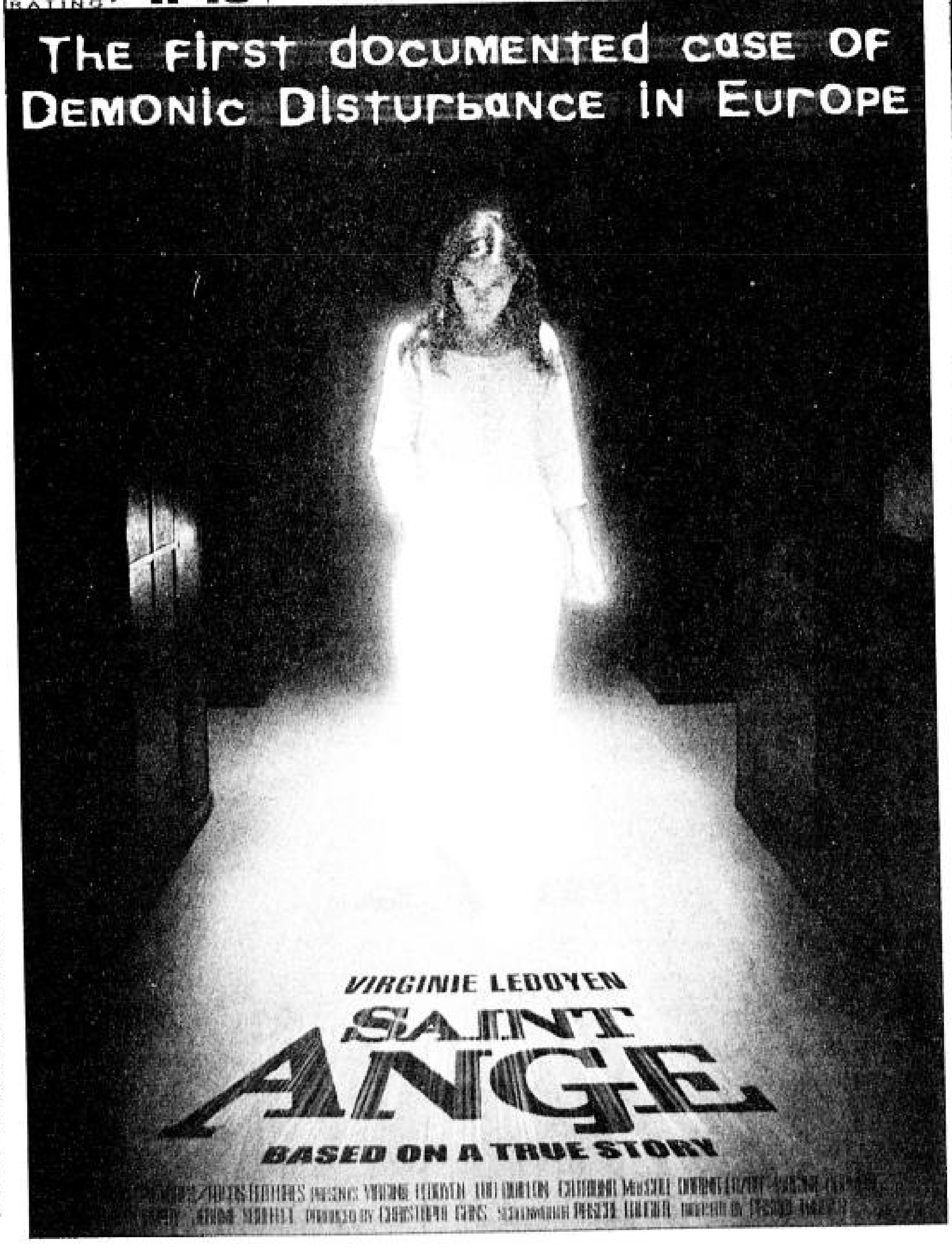
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 MOURNING GIRLS R13
CINEMA 2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2 GP
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND·EX
PROMENADE
GREENHILLS
...a dinertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 MULAWIN GP
CINEMA 4 AKO LEGAL WIFE PG13
CINEMA 5 BLUE MOON GP
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.
MUSIC MUSEUM
January 27, 2005 JED MADELA 9PM
February 3 & 4 NINA & NYOY 9PM
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

OPENS JANUARY 8
MTRCB RATING R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP.
The first documented case of Demonic Disturbance in Europe



VIRGINIE LEDOYEN
SAINT ANGE
BASED ON A TRUE STORY

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Open for advance screenings, product launches, concerts, school events and other organizational functions. *PLUS! Exclusive screenings of blockbuster films.*
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THX CERTIFIED CINEMA
CINEMAS

CALL NOW* [illegible]
SM CINEMA movietime
MMFF Highlights
Box Office News Movie Schedules Live Events
SM Cinema CENTERstage
Watch the finest movies of METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2005 at SM Cinemas
The 31st Metro Manila Film Festival 2005 - Philippines

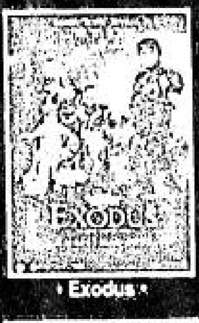
The Palanca Award winning love story of following [illegible]
•Blue Moon•

Two siblings found each other after all the consequences.
•Lagot Ka Sa Kuya Ko•

Find out the men these four ladies have in common
•Mourning Girls•

The funny and surprising fourth installment of the well-known "Mano Po" series.
•Ako Legal Wife•

Re-enter the magical world of Engkantasia with Enteng and his family.
•Enteng Kabisote•



One man is destined to save mankind from the dark forces that threatens it.
• Exodus •

One girl never thought that love could be that obsessive.
• Kutob •

The fantaserye we all admired on TV is now on the big screen.
• Mulawin The Movie •

The latest version of the classic horror series.
• Shake Rattle & Roll 2k5 •

A special military group is on a mission to capture evil terrorist operatives.
• Terrorist Hunter •

GUARANTEED SEATS
THE PODIUM 633-8976
1 BLUE MOON
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
MEGAMALL
1 EXODUS
CEBU (032) 231-3876
1 AKO LEGAK WIFE
2 KING KONG
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
MANILA
6 MULAWIN (THE MOVIE)

METRO MANILA
SM MEGAMALL
1 EXODUS
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
5 KUTOB
6 AKO LEGAL WIFE
7 MOURNING GIRLS
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
9 BLUE MOON
10 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
11 EXODUS
12 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
SM CITY FAIRVIEW
MULAWIN THE MOVIE
LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
3 KUTOB
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
5 MOURNING GIRLS
ENTENG KABISOTE 2
EXODUS
MULAWIN THE MOVIE
BLUE MOON
AKO LEGAL WIFE
ENTENG KABISOTE 2
EXODUS
SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
5 MOURNING GIRLS
6 BLUE MOON
MULAWIN THE MOVIE
EXODUS
SM CITY STA. MESA
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
EXODUS
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
MOURNING GIRLS
9 BLUE MOON
10 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 BLUE MOON
2 MOURNING GIRLS
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 BLUE MOON
5 EXODUS
ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 AKO LEGAL WIFE
8 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
9 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
10 KUTOB
SM CITY MANILA
MOURNING GIRLS
EXODUS
KUTOB
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
6 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
BLUE MOON
8 AKO LEGAL WIFE
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
10 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
11 EXODUS
12 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
SM CITY BICUTAN
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 BLUE MOON
3 MULAWIN
4 EXODUS
SM VALENZUELA NOW OPEN
ENTENG KABISOTE 2
MULAWIN THE MOVIE
EXODUS
4 BLUE MOON
SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 BLUE MOON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
EXODUS
SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
SM SAN LAZARO
1 EXODUS
2 BLUE MOON
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
4 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

LUZON
SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
2 EXODUS
3 BLUE MOON
4 MOURNING GIRLS
5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
SM CITY BAGUIO
BLUE MOON
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
MULAWIN THE MOVIE
ENTENG KABISOTE 2
SM MOLINO NOW OPEN
1 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
2 EXODUS
BLUE MOON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
SM CITY BACOOR
LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
EXODUS
BLUE MOON
SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
MOURNING GIRLS
SM CITY MARILAO
ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 BLUE MOON
4 AKO LEGAL WIFE
SM CITY DASMARINAS
EXODUS
KING KONG
3 BLUE MOON
ENTENG KABISOTE 2
SM CITY LUCENA
ENTENG KABISOTE 2
MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 BLUE MOON
EXODUS
SM CITY BATANGAS
KING KONG
2 EXODUS
ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 BLUE MOON

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO
SM CITY CEBU
AKO LEGAL WIFE
KING KONG
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
5 BLUE MOON
6 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
MOURNING GIRLS
EXODUS
SM CITY ILOILO
1 EXODUS
2 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
3 MOURNING GIRLS
4 BLUE MOON
5 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
6 KING KONG
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
8 AKO LEGAL WIFE
SM CITY DAVAO
EXODUS
2 KING KONG
MOURNING GIRLS
BLUE MOON
ENTENG KABISOTE 2
AKO LEGAL WIFE
SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 KING KONG
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM

JD Fortune, rock star!

From page A2-3

man] Michael Hutchence?

I think it's just rock n' roll and sexual energy. I've been really working on getting the TV show ("Rock Star: INXS") out of my body and getting back into just being a rock n' roll musician.

How does it feel to complete an album with INXS?

It was like trying to think of the name of an actor in some movie, or the name of something, and you can't remember. Then, just before you go to bed you go, "Aaah, that's what it is," and you get a sense of relief. The experience was so fulfilling and so warm that we actually want to do another one very soon.

You're now really part of the INXS family, aren't you?

Oh, yes. I was [supposed] to go to the movies today with Kirk [Pengilly] and his daughter. I'm going up to Tim's farm tomorrow. He's got motorbikes that we would ride around in the sun and do some jumping and stuff like that.

Describe what a regular day is like for you.

I get up at about 5:30 or 6 a.m. before it gets too hot, run for about 45 minutes and then come back, have a really nice breakfast, then do a little bit of meditation just to focus myself for the day. I usually end up calling up one of the guys and see what they're up to.

In the last couple of days, I've quit smoking. I hear the hardest is the first three or four days. I'm just trying to breathe and drink lots of water and get all nasty toxins out of my system so I can be really healthy for the tour.

Are you more relaxed and comfortable with your schedule?

I have no choice but to be relaxed because the schedule is really, really heavy. We're (INXS) touring for 18 months. We [even] need to shoot two more videos.

How many shows are you doing in Asia?

I think we're doing about 15 shows.

MiG Ayesa was recently in Manila and fulfilled his promise to kiss, hug and please his fans. What can Filipinos expect from you?

I promise that I will learn to say the most beautiful greetings and be able to carry on a good conversation [in Filipino]. I'm just learning to speak [the language] right now. I think it's a beautiful language. I was on the Internet [looking it up] and oh, my God, it's so beautiful!

Araneta Center Leisure Guide

CINEMA SCHEDULES

Gateway Cineplex 10
LEVEL 4, GATEWAY MALL
ONLY P120 ADMISSION
GLOBE PLATINUM P249 / P299
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

FOR INQUIRIES, PLEASE CALL TICKETNET AT 911-5555

	GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA BLUE MOON
EXODUS 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	
SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	AKO, LEGAL WIFE 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
MULAWIN 11:30 / 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	BLUE MOON
ENTENG KABISOTE 2 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30	MOURNING GIRLS
KUTOB 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30	LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

ALI MALL CINEMAS

① ENTENG KABISOTE 2 11:45 / 1:55 / 4:05 / 6:15 / 8:25	④ MOURNING GIRLS 12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00 / 6:00
② MULAWIN 12:35 / 3:05 / 5:35 / 8:05	⑤ AKO LEGAL WIFE 11:20 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40
③ BLUE MOON 12:15 R4 / 1:30 / 3:45 / 6:00	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

ARANETA COLISEUM EVENTS

SPELLBOUND MAGIC SHOW
Jan. 2 Mon - Showtime 2 pm & 6 pm

WORLD SLASHER CUP
January 17, 19 & 21

LOG ON TO: www.aranetacenter.net FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR WEEKLY E-MAIL ENTERTAINMENT UPDATES

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171
1 (DOLBY) ENTENG KABISOTE 2 GP
2 (DOLBY) MULAWIN THE MOVIE GP
3 (DOLBY) AKO LEGAL WIFE P13
4 (DOLBY) BLUEMOON GP
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) CLOSED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) EXODUS
2 (SDDS) MULAWIN
3 (DTS) ENTENG KABISOTE -2
4 GOLD (DTS) MOURNING GIRL
5 GOLD (DOLBY) LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
6 GOLD (SDDS) KUTOB
7 GOLD (DOLBY) BLUE MOON
8 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
9 ENTENG KABISOTE -2
10 AKO LEGAL WIFE

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 (DOLBY) ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 (DOLBY) EXODUS
4 (DOLBY) KUTOB

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 MULAWIN
2 DTS ENTENG KABISOTE
3 DOLBY EXODUS
4 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
2 (DOLBY) EXODUS
3 DTS ENTENG KABISOTE
4 MULAWIN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 ENTENG KABISOTE
2 MULAWIN
3 (DOLBY) EXODUS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 DOLBY EXODUS
4 DTS MULAWIN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plandel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 EXODUS
2 MULAWIN
3 (DOLBY) ENTENG KABISOTE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
1 EXODUS
2 ENTENG KABISOTE

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 MULAWIN
2 EXODUS
3 BLUE MOON
4 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 DOLBY AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 DOLBY ENTENG KABISOTE -2
3 DOLBY BLUE MOON
4 DOLBY EXODUS

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) EXODUS
2 MOURNING GIRL
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 BLUE MOON
5 MULAWIN

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 EXODUS
4 DOLBY DIGITAL EX SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
5 MOURNING GIRLS

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8604285, 5433994
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 ENTENG KABISOTE -2
3 MOURNING GIRL
4 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 ENTENG KABISOTE
2 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
3 AKO LEGAL WIFE
4 BLUE MOON

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 MULAWIN
2 EXODUS
3 MOURNING GIRL

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 ENTENG KABISOTE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) MULAWIN
2 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
3 DTS EX ENTENG KABISOTE
4 AKO LEGAL WIFE

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 MULAWIN
2 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
3 DOLBY AKO LEGAL WIFE
4 DTS ENTENG KABISOTE

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 MULAWIN
2 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
3 DOLBY AKO LEGAL WIFE
4 DTS ENTENG KABISOTE

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 MULAWIN
2 EXODUS

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No (044) 600-3025
1 MULAWIN
2 ENTENG KABISOTE -2
3 EXODUS

Cinemagic Pacific Mall
(Lucena City) tel. 6605271
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 ENTENG KABISOTE -2
3 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
4 MULAWIN

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
2 EXODUST

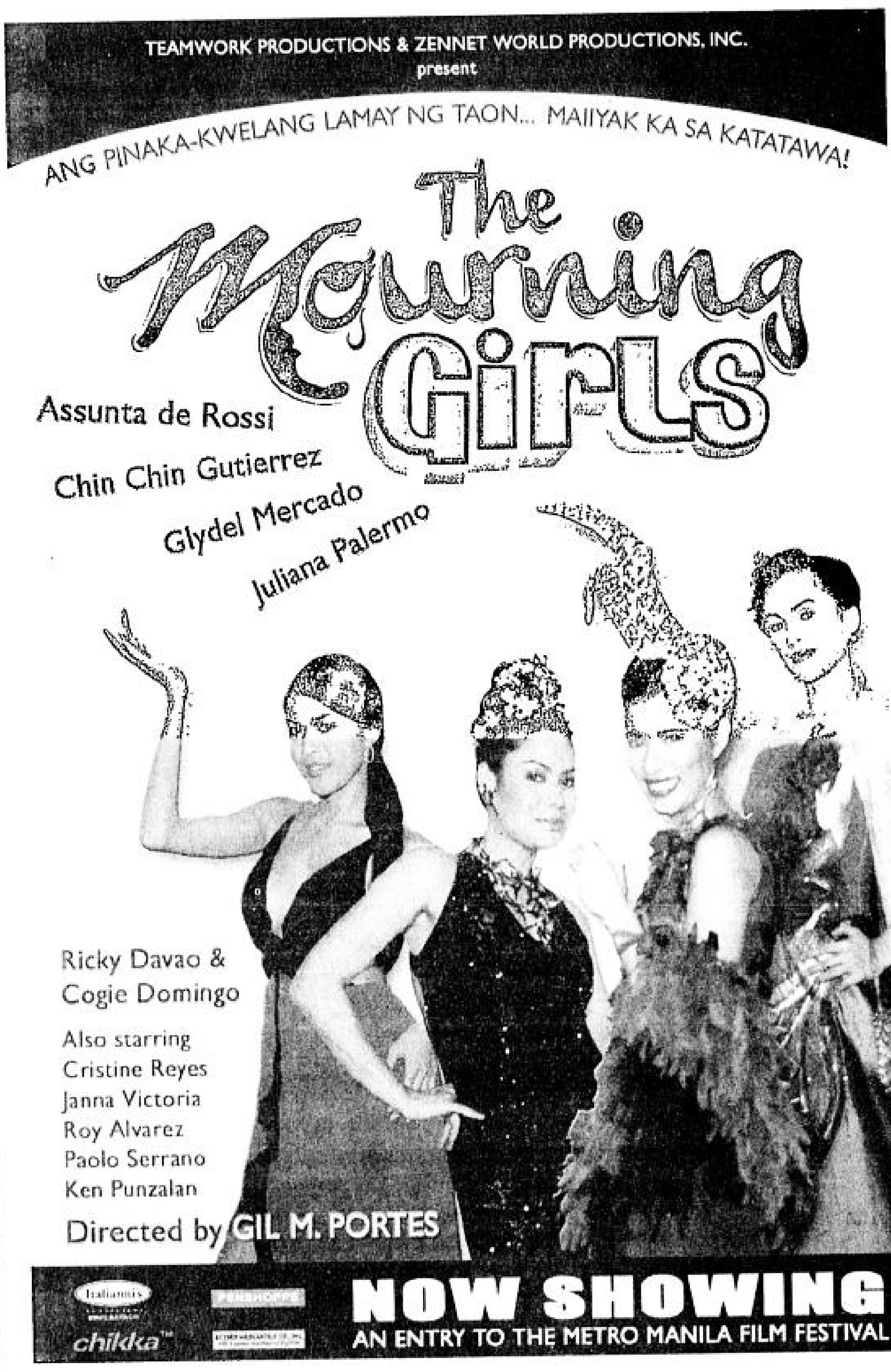
Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 SDDS BLUE MOON
2 MULAWIN
3 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
4 DTS EXODUST

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) EXODUST
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 (DTS) MULAWIN
4 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
5 ENTENG KABISOTE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 MULAWIN
4 EXODUST

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 BLUE MOON
2 MOURNING GIRLS

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE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ANG PINAKA-KWELANG LAMAY NG TAON... MAIIYAK KA SA KATATAWA!
The Mourning Girls
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Chin Chin Gutierrez
Glydel Mercado
Juliana Palermo
Ricky Davao &
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Janna Victoria
Roy Alvarez
Paolo Serrano
Ken Punzalan
Directed by GIL M. PORTES
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Enteng Kabisote 2
DIRECTED BY TONY Y. REYES
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HUA MULAN
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December 30 4:00pm / 7:00pm
January 1 4:00pm / 7:00pm
January 2 4:00pm
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DECEMBER 23, 2005 TO JANUARY 2, 2006
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PHP600, PHP 500, PHP 400, PHP 200
TICKETNET 911-5555
TicketWorld 891-9999
DZRH

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CINEMA ACCESS
635-5555
FOR ALL BRANCHES

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA 632-9118

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE • THX
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

2 EXODUS
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

3 ENTENG KABISOTE
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

4 KUTOB
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

6 MULAWIN
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

7 TERRORIST HUNTER
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

8 EXODUS
12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:30

9 ENTENG KABISOTE
10:15 12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00

10 MULAWIN
2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30

ERMITA 636-7809 to 12

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

2 ENTENG KABISOTE
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 MULAWIN
10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00

4 TERRORIST HUNTER
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 KUTOB
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00

7 EXODUS
10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

2 EXODUS
2:15 4:35 6:55 9:15

3 ENTENG KABISOTE
12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:20

4 MULAWIN
11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00

5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

6 TERRORIST HUNTER
2:15 4:35 6:55 9:15

7 KUTOB
12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:20

8 EXODUS
11:25 1:45 4:05 6:25 8:45

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 EXODUS
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
3 KUTOB
4 TERRORIST HUNTER
5 MULAWIN
6 ENTENG KABISOTE
7 AKO LEGAL WIFE
8 ENTENG KABISOTE

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-257

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
2 EXODUS
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
3 EXODUS
4 MULAWIN

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MTRCB Rating: G
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STA. ROSA (049) 837-090

1 KING KONG
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 MULAWIN
4 AKO LEGAL WIFE
5 EXODUS

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 KING KONG
2 EXODUS
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 MULAWIN
5 EXODUS

DASMARINAS (046) 862-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 MULAWIN
2 TERRORIST HUNTER
3 KUTOB
4 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
5 EXODUS

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 KING KONG
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 MULAWIN
4 MULAWIN

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8168

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 MULAWIN
4 TERRORIST HUNTER
5 KUTOB
6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL

STARMILLS (045) 876-1927 (045) 961-5270

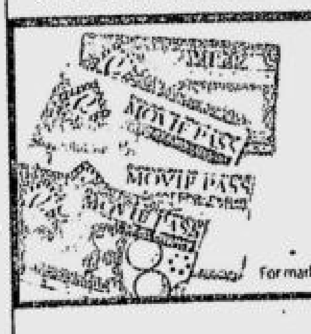
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 TERRORIST HUNTER
3 KUTOB
4 EXODUS
5 ENTENG KABISOTE
6 MULAWIN

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-046

1 KING KONG
2 EXODUS
3 MULAWIN
4 ENTENG KABISOTE
5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 KUTOB
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
3 EXODUS
4 AKO LEGAL WIFE
5 ENTENG KABISOTE
6 MULAWIN



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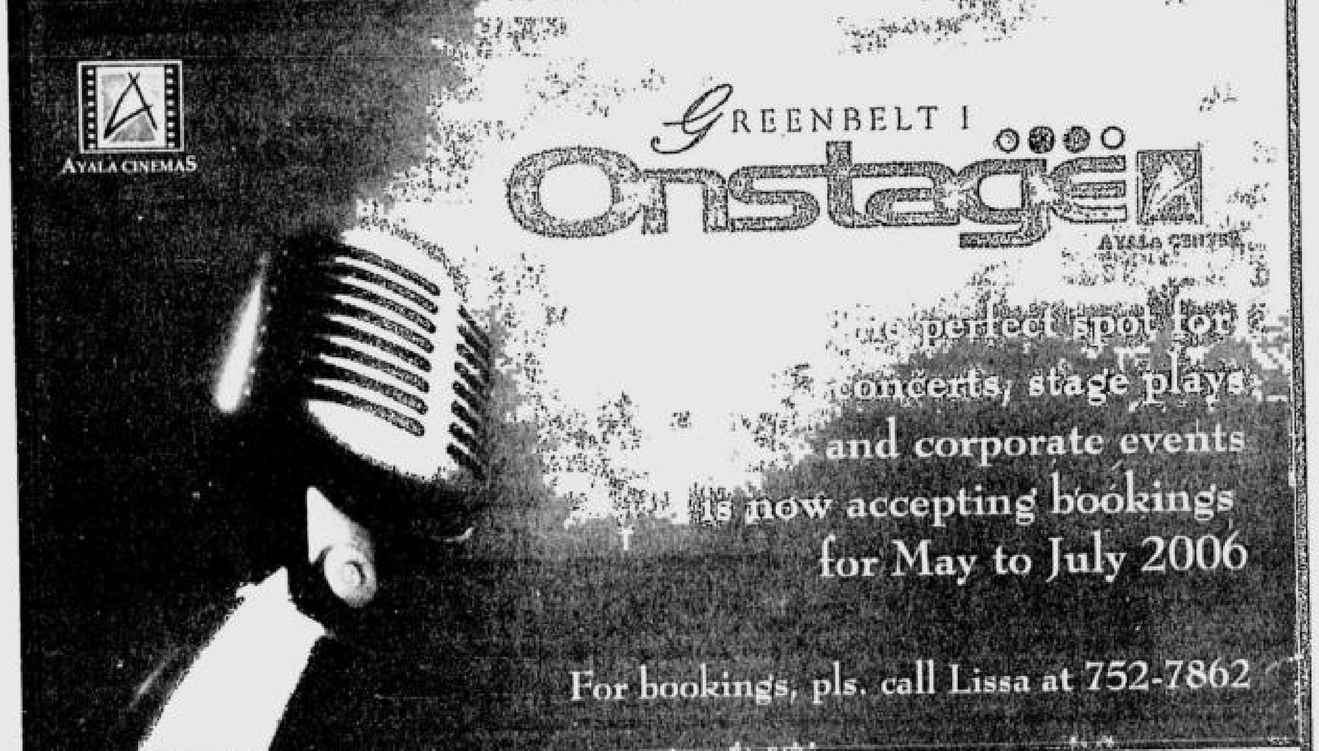
G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	4 EXODUS	
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 THX MULAWIN GUARANTEED SEATS		
	4 TERRORIST HUNTER	5 KUTOB	6 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	7 EXODUS	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2			
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX MULAWIN GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX TERRORIST HUNTER GUARANTEED SEATS			
	3 KUTOB GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL GUARANTEED SEATS	5 EXODUS GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX MULAWIN	2 TERRORIST HUNTER			
	3 KUTOB	4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	5 EXODUS		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	2 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	3 MULAWIN	4 TERRORIST HUNTER	

AYALA CINEMAS



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② KUTOB
③ MULAWIN
④ ENTENG KABISOTE 2
⑤ AKO LEGAL WIFE

EVENTS! EVENTS!

MARKET!
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Bonifacio Global City
The fun is in the finds
Christmas Shopping Bag

1. Promo period is from Dec. 9 to 31, 2005.
2. For every P500 single or accumulated receipt purchase dated on the same day in any regular retail store, food choices, and Metro Department Store and Supermarket, shoppers will get 1 Christmas Shopping Bag.
3. A maximum of 4 shopping bags will be given to shoppers presenting single or accumulated receipts amounting to P2001 and over.
4. Shoppers will present their receipt to the Customer Service booth to redeem their Market! Market! shopping bag.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A2-580, Series of 2005

Potential MMFF top grossers

THIS EARLY, FILM PEOPLE ARE SECOND-guessing the box-office results of the ongoing Metro Manila Film Festival. Since it's shaped up as a principally fantasy film fest, the bets are generally being placed on "Exodus," "Mulawin" and "Enteng Kabisote 2."

"Exodus" scores popularity points because it's visually impressive, having invested many millions of pesos in its striking and imaginative special effects.

For its part, "Mulawin" expects fans of its original TV series to want to see the big-screen version. Also, the film combines the "Mulawin" *and* "Encantandia" series, so its viewer appeal could double.

Finally, "Enteng 2" banks on the original movie's supremacy at the box office some filmfests ago. The people behind the production hope that many of its original film's millions of viewers will also want to patronize this sequel. It was the festival's opening-day top grosser?

So, who could emerge as the box-office champ in the end? Taking all factors into consideration, it's a toss-up between "Exodus" and "Mulawin."

"Mulawin" scores because of its huge potential carry-over audience from television and striking storytelling.

But "Exodus" is definitely a viewable movie in its own right, so we're hoping that film fest viewers patronize it as well, to encourage its producers to come up with similarly big-budgeted and well-produced movies in the future.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

"ENTENG Kabisote" was first-day winner

Another viewable film fest entry we've caught in preview is "Ako Legal Wife." The comedy production provides a welcome alternative viewing option for people who could end up with a surfeit of fantasy productions.

Stalkers strike again

Celebrities love being rich and famous, but there's a down side to fame: stalkers. **Jodie Foster, John Lennon, Charlize Theron** and **George Clooney** are only a few of the stars who have suffered from the onslaught of overly obsessive fans who hounded them until it became really scary.

Recently, however, a fan of TV show **David Letterman** turned the tables on him by accusing the star comedian of stalking *her*!

She sought court action to inhibit **Letterman** from hounding her—and she succeeded in securing a temporary injunction to that effect!

Legal experts have rapped the judge for his surprising decision to take the complainant's plea seriously, so it could be struck down soon, to the embarrassed **Letterman**'s great relief.

What is the woman complaining about, exactly? It seems that, when he's on TV, she sees him making "coded" gestures that send "unwelcome" messages to her—!

Can she prove his stalking intent when he makes those "stalking" gestures? That sounds pretty far-fetched to us, but **Letterman** doesn't think the situation is funny—at all.

BIG BUDGET pays off for "Exodus," which scores with imaginative special effects.

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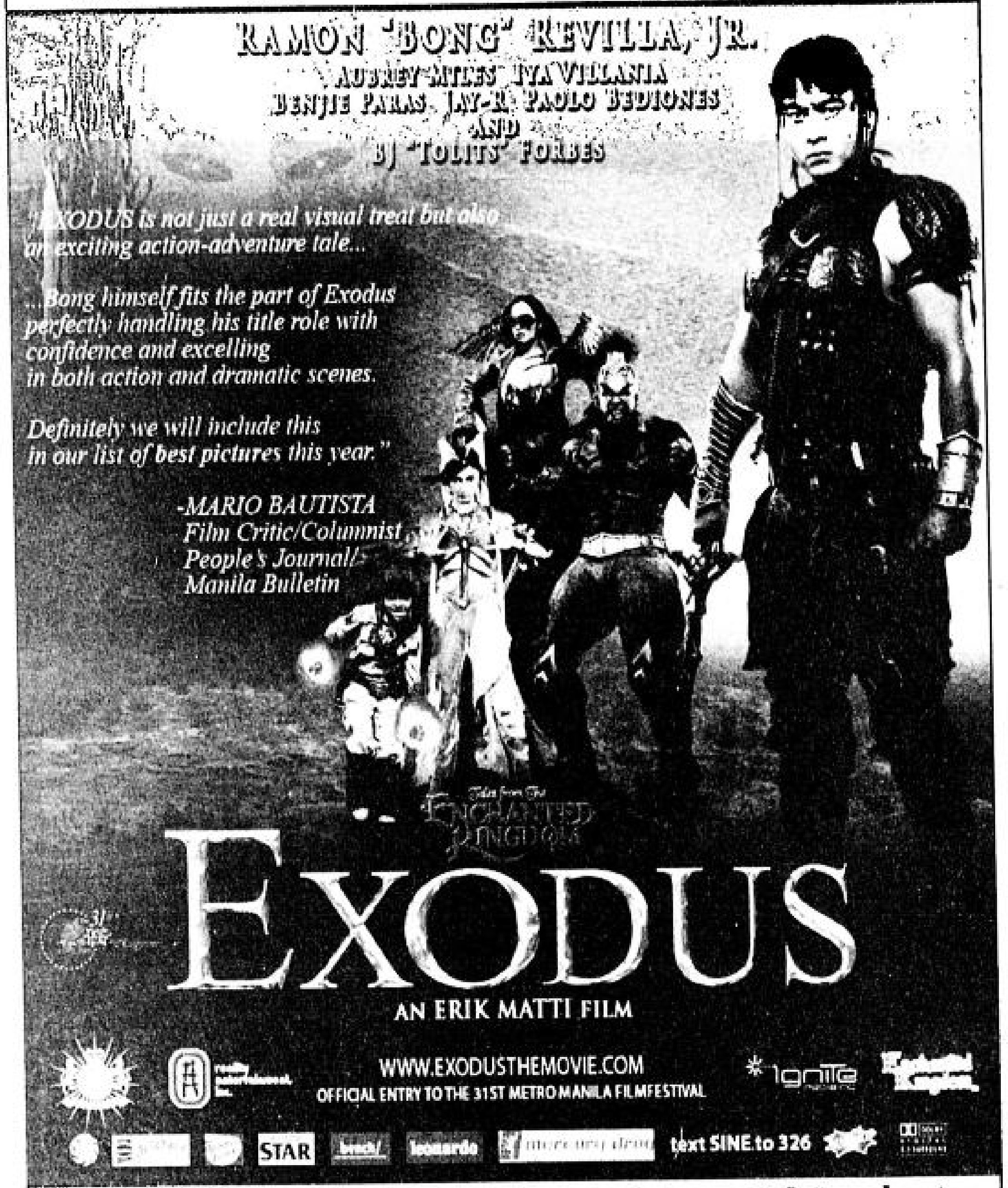
RAMON "BONG" REVILLA, JR.
AUBREY MILES IYA VILLANIA
BENJIE PARAS JAY-R PAOLO BEDIONES
AND
BJ "TOLITS" FORBES
"EXODUS is not just a real visual treat but also an exciting action-adventure tale...
...Bong himself fits the part of Exodus perfectly handling his title role with confidence and excelling in both action and dramatic scenes.
Definitely we will include this in our list of best pictures this year."
-MARIO BAUTISTA
Film Critic/Columnist
People's Journal/
Manila Bulletin
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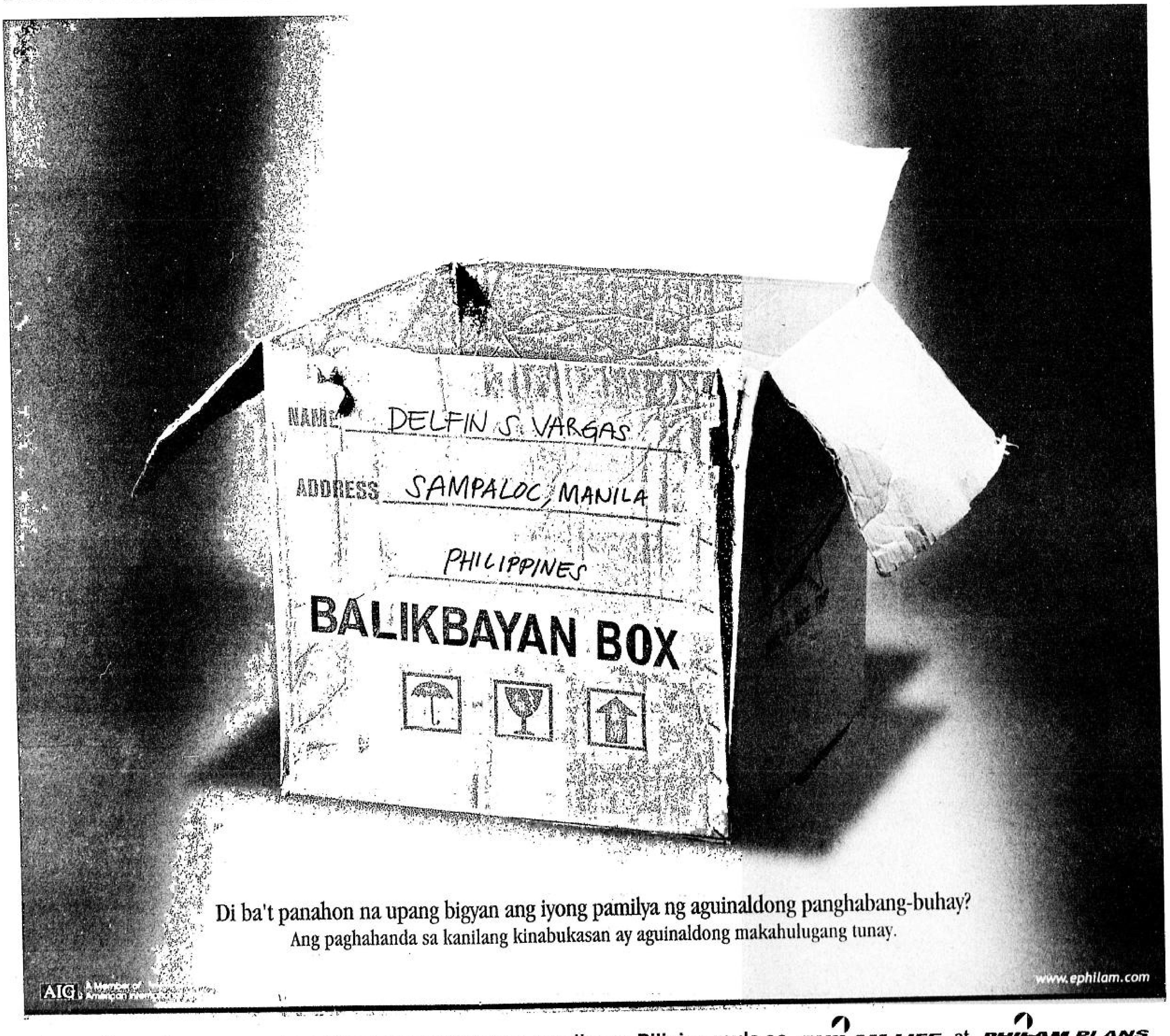
MORNING GIRLS **R13** Please call for screening schedule	**MULAWIN** **GP** 12:20,2:50,5:30, 7:50,10:15	**AKO LEGAL WIFE: MANO PO 4** **PG13** 12:30,2:50,5:10, 7:30,10:00
ENTENG KABISOTE: THE LEGEND CONTINUES **GP** 12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:50,10:10	**BLUE MOON** **GP** Please call for screening schedulé	**EXODUS: TALES FROM THE ENCHANTED KINGDOM** **GP** 12:40,3:00,5:20, 7:40,10:00

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41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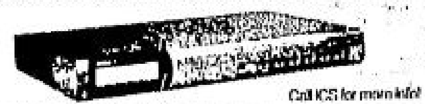
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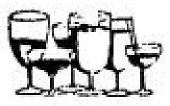


Taipannic bonuses /B3

$40M worth of loans for microfinancing OKd /B8

Promoting use of alternative transport fuels

By Abigail L. Ho

THE CABINET-LEVEL NATIONAL Economic and Development Authority Board has endorsed to President Macapagal-Arroyo for approval an executive order reducing to zero the tariffs slapped on imported materials and components used for the assembly of vehicles powered by alternative fuels.

The Department of Energy and the Board of Investments, an agency of the trade department, proposed the EO to encourage investors to go into the assembly of vehicles that would use biodiesel, bio-ethanol, compressed natural gas (CNG) and electricity.

The proposed EO brings down to zero both the most favored nation (MFN) and common effective preferential tariff (CEPT) rates on imported components and accessories of hybrid, electric, flex-fuel and CNG vehicles by qualified Motor Vehicle Development Program participants.

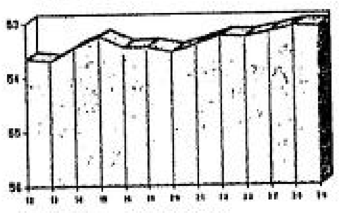
At present, the tariffs on imported motor vehicle parts and components are 3 percent under the MFN and one percent under the CEPT.

The CEPT rate applies to imports coming from Association of Southeast Asian Nation countries, while the MFN rate applies to those coming from non-Asean countries.

ZERO DUTY/ B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



DECEMBER

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱53.09 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 29, 2005

¥117.48 = $1

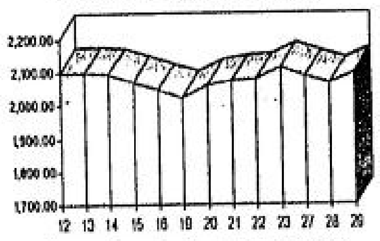
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 30, 2005

GOLD: **$514.00-514.50**

per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 30, 2005

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks advance 1.4%

STOCKS ENDED 2005 ON AN UPBEAT NOTE, as investors took advantage of the market's recent losses to hunt for bargains, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index rose 28.72 points Thursday, or 1.4 percent, to 2,096.04. The index shed 2.1 percent over the past two trading days, including Wednesday's one percent loss.

The main index was up 15 percent from its 2004 closing level of 1,822.83. There was no trading last Friday, a public holiday. Trading resumes today.

Blue chips dominated trading, led by Bank of the Philippine Islands, which rose 1.9 percent to P54.50, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., up 3.1 percent at P1,836, and Globe Telecom, up 2.1 percent to P735. *AP*

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URC earmarking $60M in '06 for expansion of beverage plants

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

UNIVERSAL ROBINA CORP. (URC), THE branded food firm of tycoon John Gokongwei Jr., plans to invest about $60 million to expand its beverage plants in the Philippines, industry sources told the INQUIRER.

The sources said URC might also put up a beverage plant in Vietnam.

Under the plan, URC will expand its beverage plant in Laguna and build a new factory in Pampanga.

URC is raising about $200 million through the offering of shares to international and local investors this year at a maximum of P18 a share, documents from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) showed.

To support the expansion program, URC is setting aside about P5.5 billion in 2006 for capital expenditures. This will be partially funded through the proposed share offering.

Of the proposed budget, some P2.84 billion will be spent for the expansion of its branded consumer food operations , largely the beverage line, and its presence in international markets such as China and Vietnam.

URC is also allocating P2.37 billion out of its capex for the expansion of its sugar mill and refinery through Southern Negros Development Corp. The remaining P317.1 million will be used for additional manufacturing, machinery and equipment for URC's agro-industrial division.

After the success of its "C2" green tea brand, URC is set to launch a new fitness drink called "Rush", packaged in a blue bottle.

We are a blessed nation

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

WHILE MOST OF US PROBABLY WOULDN'T look back to the past year with particular fondness, a recent survey showed that more than four of five Filipinos are hopeful about the coming new year.

Eighty-five percent of adult Filipinos look to 2006 with hope rather than fear, according to the Fourth Quarter Social Weather Stations (SWS) Survey conducted from Nov. 27 to Dec. 4, 2005.

Remarkably, the poorer respondents were more hopeful (87 percent) than the higher-income respondents (73 percent).

Equally remarkable is the way the survey respondents indicated "To improve their attitude in general or to be a better person" and "to work harder/look for work/venture into business" as the top New Year's resolutions. All this tells me that our country is still worth sticking it out with.

I know I have been sounding rather negative about our current economic, social and political situation in the past weeks, but I would rather end 2005 and start 2006 on a positive note, counting our blessings.

The economy may have been buffeted by multiple pressures ranging from skyrocketing oil prices and fiscal difficulties to political strife and natural calamities, but as many of us like to say, the Filipinos' resilience through adversity just keeps seeing us through.

Crisis to crisis

Many of us wonder why misfortunes never seem to leave us, and why we can't ever seem to achieve the same economic takeoff experienced by our more dynamic Asean neighbors. Ateneo economists have described our current situation as one of muddling through from crisis to crisis, and never quite getting anywhere.

Ironically, the SWS survey results indicate that those who suffer more tend to have the more positive attitude. It is this persevering, never-give-up attitude that equips our people to withstand the worst of economic and political crises that have persistently challenged us through the decades.

Ultimately, it is this same survivor attitude that will help us prevail and turn our country around in God's proper time.

In the Bible, Job suffered misfortune after misfortune, yet remained steadfast and held on to his faith in God. In the end, he was rewarded by God with prosperity far beyond where he began.

It is Job's seemingly incessant travails that our country has been going through, but many among the faithful believe that God has a special plan for this country. No less than Pope John Paul VI had prophesied that the Philippines will be the light to Asia and the world, and it will be our young people who will bear that light.

Counting blessings

It doesn't take much for one to see that ours is a nation truly blessed. We have been endowed with such an abundance of natural resources of various kinds on our mountains, in our land, and in our waters.

It is well established that biodiversity in the Philippines is among the richest in the world. We have also been described as having the richest mineral resource deposits per capita and per unit area in the globe.

But our richest resource by far is our resilient people, millions of whom are now deployed all around the globe. Many are convinced that this is in fulfillment of a strategic role Filipinos are destined to play in the world, whether in the economic, political, cultural or spiritual realms.

Writer Jessica Zafra describes it, half tongue-in-cheek but also half seriously, as our impending domination of the world.

If one is to believe in this as part of our destiny as a nation (to be a "nation without borders", as another writer has put it), then one begins to see rhyme and reason to all the economic hardship that has driven our *kababayans* all over the world through all these years.

Favorable global trends

Meanwhile, global economic trends are working in our ultimate favor. Aging populations in the rich industrialized countries are providing a wide array of rich opportunities for Filipinos, whether at home or abroad.

From caregivers, physicians and nurses to retirement estate developers and medical transcribers, the opportunities are staggering. And Filipinos are best positioned to cash in on these roles, given the acknowledged loving and caring culture of the Filipino people.

Our own Miss International Precious Lara Quigaman put it beautifully in her title-clinching description of the Filipina domestic as one who makes a living out of caring and loving other people.

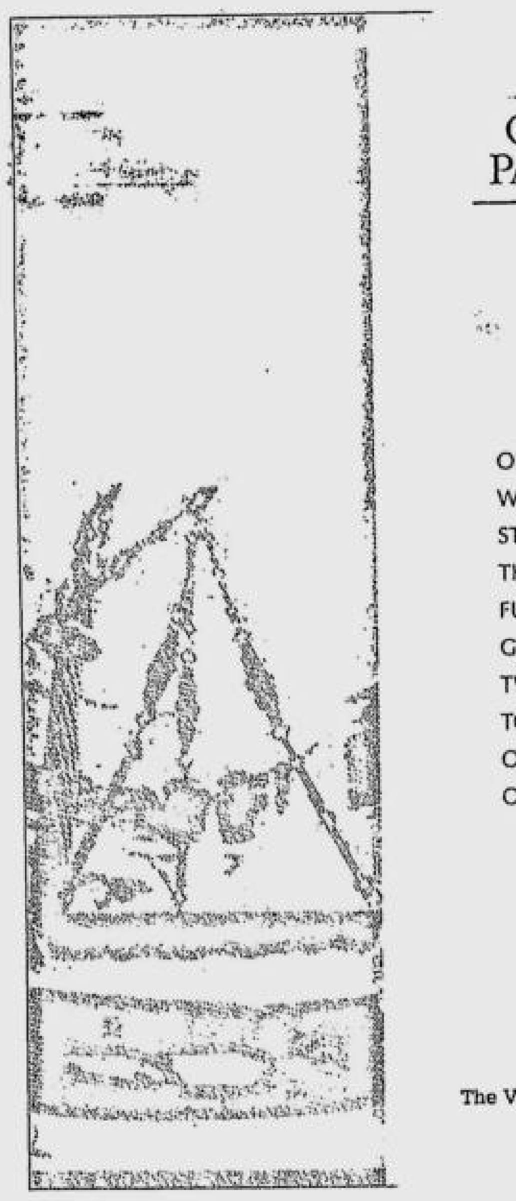
The rush toward business process outsourcing (BPO) due to rising labor costs in rich economies is another key global trend working for Filipinos' benefit.

Call centers, medical transcription, architectural and engineering designs, animation, financial accounts management, and many other backroom processes are among the services now providing higher-than-average compensation to many thousands of young Filipino workers and entrepreneurs.

There is, by many indications, a bright future awaiting the Philippines. I believe, along with countless other Filipinos, that God has much in store for our beloved country. He is just waiting for us, like Job, to turn back humbly to Him and yield to His Divine Plan.

Unfortunately, the SWS survey showed only 1 percent of respondents indicating their New Year's resolution to be "improving their relationship with God."

If we are to fulfill our nation's destiny, this is one statistic we'll all have to improve on first. *(Comments are welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu.)*



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The Valero Tower, 122 Valero Street, Salcedo Village
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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Dec. 29, 2005)

Stocks	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	34	34	33	34	403,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	53.5	54.5	53	54.5	2,979,300
China Banking Corp.	610	620	610	620	570
Citystate Savings Bank	18.25	19	18.25	19	120,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.61	1,130,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	57.5	59	57.5	59	60,000
International Exch. Bank	20.25	21	20.25	21	10,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32.5	31.5	32	683,400
Philippine National Bank	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	22,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14	14	13.5	13.5	12,400
Security Bank Corp.	33.5	34.5	33	34.5	202,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	32	32	32	32	16,200
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	25,000
First Abacus Financial	0.65	0.75	0.51	0.75	1,520,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3100	3160	3100	3160	30
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.02	1.02	117,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	150	150	150	150	10
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2100	2130	2100	2130	1,800
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	3,400
Diversified Fin. Network	4	4	4	4	1,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.92	0.93	0.91	0.93	2,790,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	715	740	715	735	111,260
Ipeople Inc.	2.95	3	2.9	2.9	228,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	600,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.046	0.047	0.046	0.047	13,000,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.35	3.5	3.35	3.5	3,161,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1780	1835	1780	1835	64,610
Ivantage Corp.	0.58	0.6	0.58	0.6	8,800,000
Philweb Corp.	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.015	24,400,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	14	15	14	14.25	1,500
Manila Electric Co. B	21.75	21.75	21.75	21.75	80,400
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	3,575,000
Petron Corp.	4.45	4.5	4.45	4.5	2,102,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	10,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	380,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	131,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.75	0.78	0.73	0.78	5,580,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	20,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.4	2,576,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	128,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.25	23.75	23.25	23.75	120,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	41.5	41.5	40.5	40.5	461,300
Pancake House Inc.	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.9	393,000
RFM Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.71	280,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64.5	65	64.5	65	170,900
San Miguel Corp. B	87.5	89	87.5	88.5	75,200
Universal Robina Corp.	18.75	19.75	18.75	19.5	141,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.29	0.26	0.29	450,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	312.5	315	310	315	93,110
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	300,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	447,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11	11	11	11	1,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.06	2.08	2.06	2.08	90,000
APC Group Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	300,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	640,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.1	1.44	1.1	1.44	55,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9	9	9	9	141,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.14	500,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	4,884,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.97	100,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	4,100,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.165	0.175	0.165	0.175	1,060,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.32	920,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3	3.15	2.95	3.15	2,363,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.024	0.025	0.024	0.025	3,500,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	0.8	0.89	0.8	0.89	90,000
F&J Prince Hldgs. B	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	10,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	48	49	48	49	994,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	10,000
Ionics Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	202,000
Jardine Davies Inc.	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	6,700
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.25	3.45	3.25	3.45	2,724,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	5,000,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	2,000,000
Medco Holdings	0.3	0.42	0.3	0.42	60,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.2	1.2	17,908,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	10,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.34	6,820,000
Paxys Inc.	6	6.4	6	6.4	5,664,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.28	1.32	1.28	1.32	746,000
SM Investments Corp.	240	240	239	240	116,180
South China Resources Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.28	0.3	0.28	0.3	70,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	150,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Bella Corp.	1	1.02	0.99	1.02	10,600,000
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.58	0.68	0.68	0.68	50,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.42	1.48	1.4	1.48	300,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	4,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	13	13	12.75	12.75	69,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series N	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	9.7	9.8	9.5	9.7	865,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.7	9.9	9.7	9.9	4,957,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.06	1.1	1.06	1.1	1,500,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.88	1.88	253,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.23	0.23	0.2	0.2	1,140,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.42	720,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	1,347,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.3	2.32	2.3	2.32	80,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	190,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	1,090,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	83,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	200,000
SM Development Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.38	1.42	150,000
San Miguel Prop. Inc.	38.5	38.5	38.5	38.5	300
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8	7.9	7.9	10,038,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	60,000
Apex Mining Co., Inc. B	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	180,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	5,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.5	5.8	5.5	5.8	203,000
Benguet Corp. A	6.9	7	6.9	7	30,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	66,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	750,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.245	0.26	0.245	0.25	5,610,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.018	200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.028	30,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.005	0.0055	61,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.36	1.36	1.3	1.3	3,921,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.74	1.76	1.72	1.76	7,889,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28.5	29	28	29	1,488,200
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	34,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	25,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.125	0.125	1,060,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	20,000

GLOBEQUEST VPN EXPRESS PROVIDES SECURE, COST-EFFECTIVE REMOTE NETWORK SERVICE

Traditionally, companies requiring remote access for their data transport and traffic have to rely on prohibitive costs of dedicated data lines or the cheaper but much slower dial-up connections.

However, organizations now have an affordable alternative to traditional remote access solutions by shifting to the Internet to securely extend the reach of their network resources.

Thus, GlobeQUEST is introducing VPN Express, a method of ensuring private, secure communication between two or more offices in geographically separate locations via the Internet at a reasonable price.

It is best for retailers, franchisers, airlines, logistics and traders, manufacturers, government and academe, and other multi-site businesses and could be used for help desk support, POS application, remote monitoring, inventory management, video conferencing, e-learning, application hosting, among others.

GlobeQUEST VPN Express initiates IPSec tunneling and encryption to enable a site office of the customer network to be virtually connected to its headquarters and other branches.

IPSec is a protocol which sits on top of the Internet Protocol (IP) layer and ensures enhanced Internet security and privacy of data, thereby preventing unauthorized persons from accessing the information being received and sent.

In addition, the IPSec-based GlobeQUEST VPN Express integrates and supports multiple technologies and access methods that allow companies to build on their existing network and continue to run business applications whether voice, data or video over a wide area.

Thus, clients can realize significant savings on operational expenses through innovative design and approach to private networking.

The service is, likewise, easily scalable, customizable and flexible to meet the clients' growing needs and is fully-integrated with GlobeQUEST's private data network services such as MPLS (Multiprotocol Label Switching) which can be used to aggregate traffic to the head office.

GlobeQUEST VPN Express offers variants that are tailor-fit to customer networking requirements and provides the clients with an "always on" connectivity to ensure real time information availability from its geographically dispersed branches or location.

Real-time connectivity enables customer to have updated information from dispersed location. This translates into faster decision making, better monitoring and improve market response

It is available anywhere anyone can get an Internet connection whether in the Philippines or abroad and can be accessed through foreign partner service providers or aggregators.

It also provides end-to-end management for proactive monitoring of customer network as well as value-added features such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and Managed Security.

VPN Express aims to fulfill the demand for secure connectivity of most enterprises today in a cost-effective, fast and simple approach. Businesses can link up customers, suppliers and partners to drive more revenues, act faster and extend better customer experience.

Expect more from GlobeQUEST, as it positions itself as your ICT partner of choice in delivering relevant and practical solutions.

GlobeQUEST, the corporate business group of Innove Communications, is a leader in first-rate networking solutions in the Philippines. It has an assembly of products and services such as GlobeQUEST Private

Networks, GlobeQUEST Broadband Internet, GlobeQUEST Corporate Voice, GlobeQUEST Broadband Access, GlobeQUEST DataCentres, and GlobeQUEST Enterprise Mobility Solutions - each designed to answer any challenge a business may conceive. For more information, pls. log on to www.globequest.com.ph.

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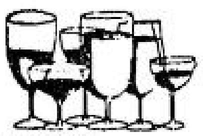

Victor C. Agustin

SAN MIGUEL CORP. STILL HANDS OUT THE fattest pay envelopes among the listed companies, despite it being no longer the country's most profitable enterprise.

For the year just past, the country's biggest food and beverage complex was estimated to have paid chair/CEO Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., president Ramon Ang and seven other key officers P231.5 million in salaries, bonuses and allowances, not counting stock options.

That is about P25.7 million each officer, on average, in exchange for the Cojuangco management turning in P8.08 billion in profits in 2004.

Contrast these figures with those of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Corp., which in 2004 churned out an eye-popping P27.97 billion in net income.

In return, PLDT president/CEO Napoleon Nazareno and 30 top officers were estimated to have received P223.7 million, or about P7.45 million on average, in their 2005 pay packets.

Apples to apples, even the executives of the smaller Globe Telecom were better compensated than PLDT's, the industry leader.

Globe president Gerardo Ablaza Jr. and nine other top officers were estimated to have received P106.35 million in 2005 compensation, or about P10.6 million each on average.

Globe's 2004 net income was nearly P11.26 billion, nearly half more than San Miguel's. Among the taipans, the Gokongwei family lived up to their parsimonious reputation, despite their listed holding company now a regional conglomerate.

For 2005, chair/CEO James Go, chair emeritus John Gokongwei Jr. and his son Lance were estimated to have paid themselves and two other top JG Summit executives P42.5 million in all, or about P8.5 million each on average.

In 2004, the Gokongweis cranked out P5.9 billion in net profits out of their food, beverage, airline, petrochemical, textile, hotel, real estate and retail spread.

Surprisingly, the Sys out-Gokongweid the Gokongweis when it comes to paying themselves in the Sy holding company, SM Investments Corp.

Despite SMIC posting P5.35 billion in net income for the fiscal year 2005, the combined pay checks of president Harley Sy and his brothers Hans and Herbert and two others for the same year totaled a thrifty P18.999 million, or about P3.8 million each on average.

Banking spreads

AMONG the banks, the quietly profitable Chinabank surprisingly beat the big boys in executive compensation.

Chair Gilbert Dee, president/CEO Peter Dee and three others were estimated to have received more than P63.3 million, or about P15.8 million each on average, in total 2005 compensation.

On the other hand, the country's biggest bank, Metrobank, was estimated to have compensated its majority owner/chair/CEO George Ty, president Antonio Abacan and two others about P60.08 million, or P15.02 million each on average, in the same year.

The Ayala-controlled Bank of the Philippine Islands, meanwhile, rewarded new president Aurelio Montinola III and four other top suits about P72.13 million, or about P14.4 million each on average.

Hamburger gravy

WHILE hamburger-flipping may be the butt of jokes within the financial press, working for the top of the fastfood chain feels like working for a leading bank or a hot telecom company, remuneration-wise.

Jollibee president/CEO Tony Tan Caktiong and four top officers of the country's biggest restaurant chain were estimated to have received P55.47 million, or P11.09 million each on average, in 2005 compensation.

That pay scale easily eclipses the average package in PLDT or Banco de Oro (average top executive package: P6.96 million) or even the Gokongweis', despite Jollibee reporting P1.58 billion in 2004 profits.

The Jollibee package even noses out the now multinational International Container Terminal Services Inc. of Enrique Razon Jr. Razon and four ICTSI officers were estimated to have received P51.9 million, or P10.38 million each on average, in 2005 compensation, on the back of P1.06 billion 2004 profits.

Heard through the grapevine

REP. Ronaldo Zamora may be the San Juan representative, but it looks like the former Estrada executive secretary is determined to make Ayala Heights in Quezon City his actual residence.

The portly congressman has now doubled his residential footprint after acquiring the neighboring lot in the exclusive subdivision.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Zero duty …

From page B1

Upon the approval of the EO, the BOI, pursuant to its Motor Vehicle Development Program, will issue the guidelines that will govern the implementation of the preferential tariff privilege.

The BOI's Motor Vehicle Development Program aims to promote the country as the Asean region's manufacturing hub for motor vehicles, and motor vehicle parts and components.

The proposed EO will not only make the program more attractive to investors, but will also help promote the use of alternative transport fuels.

Even prior to the drafting of the proposed EO, Ford Motors has already committed to invest $20 million for the establishment of a factory that will produce flex-fuel vehicles, or those that run on alternative fuels, in the Philippines.

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Camp John Hay	180,000	150,000
Canlubang Golf	650,000	Pls. Call
Canyon Woods	120,000	-
Capitol Hills	70,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,500,000	1,300,000
Celebrity Sports	120,000	100,000
City Sports Club Cebu	-	380,000
Club Filipino	120,000	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	180,000	150,000/200,000*/250,000**
Eastridge A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Evercrest	65,000	-
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	120,000/200,000*	-
Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	270,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	-
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,000,000
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	2,100,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	370,000/Pls. Call*	300,000
Makati Sports Club	200,000	155,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	350,000	250,000
Metropolitan Club A/B*	120,000/150,000*	90,000
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	Pls. Call	150,000
Mt. Malarayat A	230,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/400,000**	150,000
Puerto Azul	Pls. Call	-
Punta Fuego	Pls. Call	-
Quezon City Sports Club	160,000	130,000
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	90,000/100,000*/250,000**	130,000*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	180,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	80,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	60,000*
Spa & Lodge	520,000	-
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	Pls. Call	1,100,000/1,600,000*
The Palms Country Club	Pls. Call	380,000
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands	730,000	680,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	600,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club	Pls. Call	-
Valley Golf	200,000	180,000
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	6,350,000	6,000,000

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FOREST HILLS B	200K	MANILA POLO	2.175M
MAKATI SPORTS	180K	MANILA GOLF IND	11M
MANILA POLO	2.3M	MANILA GOLF CORP	11.5M
METRO CLUB	150K	METRO CLUB	120K
ORCHARD A	160K	ORCHARD B	250K
PUNTA FUEGO	400K	QUEZON CITY SPORTS	130K
SOUTHWOODS A	350K	RIVIERA GOLF/SPORTS B	130K
SPA & LODGE	450K	STA. ELENA B	1.450M
TOWER CLUB C	300K	WACK WACK	6.2M
VALLE VERDE	90K		

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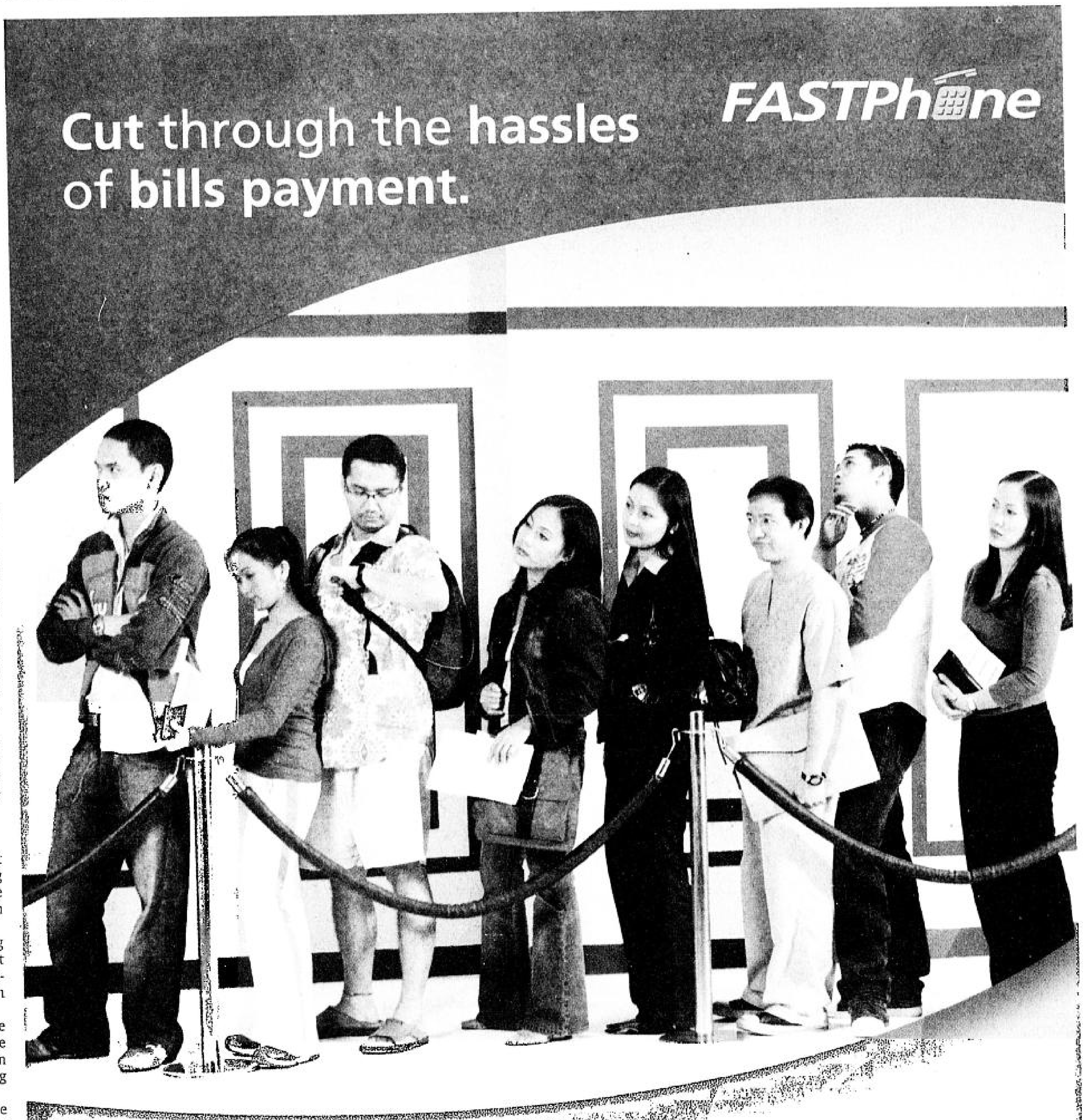
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BUSINESS*Monday*

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

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Great expectations for 2006

SY

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BERMUDEZ

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

EVERY YEAR, THERE ARE economic winners and losers. Industry trends will be known in a few months from now. But firms already know how their businesses fared.

BusinessMonday asked CEOs how their companies performed last year and what they expect this year.

Tessie Sy, president, SM Inc.

Our businesses in retail and shopping centers are doing well, thanks to the efforts of our executives and staff who work hard to meet targets and make shopping more exciting for our customers. If we continue the same efforts—if not enhance these—we would be okay with 2006.

Jose L. Cuisia president, Philamlife

2005 was not a very good year for us. We expect 2006 to be a better year because we expect GDP growth to be higher this year and greater political and economic stability.

Ambassador Francisco Alba, chair, Prudentialife

2005 was a little bit slow but 2006 should be better.

Doyee Tactacan-Tumpalan, president of First Quadrant

Business was mostly challenging but nevertheless rewarding this 2005. It was a time for aggressive innovation as a means to further strengthen our position in the industry and it was also an opportunity for ingenious product development that once again showcases Filipino ingenuity. Some will say that it was a very trying year, but for me, it was a test of resilience that proved how integrity, commitment and sustainability can triumph over any adversity.

2006 brings much reason to be optimistic because I foresee breakthrough products, particularly in the nutraceutical market, creating a stronger niche. Hopefully, the Philippine herbal industry will flourish, expand and gain global recognition.

Ramon Lopez, vice president, RFM Corp.

RFM did well in 2005 sustaining the turnaround in 2004, mainly due to restrategizing and internal cost rationalization. With consumer spending tempered, some food and beverage categories grew single digits only but others declined so, since sales weren't that exciting, we had to do complementing cost restructuring to still achieve bottomline targets.

2006 is seen as having quite the same minimal growth, due to expectation of tempered consumer spending of inflationary effects of world oil prices and new tax measures. Thus, the key is how to make the market exciting by offering new products that the market wants, and find ways to offer quality products but at more affordable prices.

Joey Bermudez, president, Chinatrust (Phils.) Inc.

Business was significantly better for us in 2005 than 2004, primarily because our new business strategy begain taking hold. Our investments are paying off quite reasonably. We expect 2006 to be quite testy given the challenges in the real economy. We do not rule out near-term shocks in the environment.

Dr. Vicki Belo, medical director, Belo Medical Group

Last year was pretty flat. There was an increase in the total number of patients coming to the clinic but they did fewer procedures.

Expectations for next year—we are concentrating on beauty tourism because these patients have higher spending capacity plus they will also bring in dollars which will help the country.

Catherine Y. Tantoco, vice president, Rustan Supercenter Inc. (Shopwise)

January to October was extremely good for us. November was lackluster and December is still wait and see. Next year will be challenging but it has been that way the past two years. Home furnishings decor and appliances did well versus adult and children's apparel which performed poorly.

Fresh items, baked goods, health and beauty as well as pharma did well. Chocolates and snacks were down.

Jose Magsaysay, Potato Corner, Quick Stix, Wonder Waffle, China China, George Popcorn and Potatobilities

For the industry I am in—micro food—2005 was a challenging year. I take it as a taste of what to expect in 2006. Only companies who think out of the box and who continue to see how important brand integrity is will score well.

I see many opportunities in 2006 for my industry which will give us 100 percent increase in income. As for the property consultancy and commercial leasing, business in '05 was a banner year as we were blessed with many opportunities here and abroad.

In '06 we see more projects for us outside the Philippines.

Malu de Venecia, marketing and communications director, Cinderella Group

The Cinderella Group is expected to post a marginal growth in 2005 despite the difficult time the local retail industry is presently experiencing. We carefully planned out our strategies for 2005 with our store renovations and right sizing and we also set realistic targets for our new brands.

Citifashion Specialty Store Inc. (CSSI), part of the Cinderella Group is projected to achieve a 30 percent growth from its performance in 2004 plus additional sales from its new brands—Rampage and Clarks. Key success drivers are the new global business strategy for Esprit, product improvement for U2 and a more focused brand imaging for British India. These brands are the group's current stronghold and source of growth.

For Cinderella stores' performance, on the other hand, we are presently experiencing positive results from our store re-imaging (Cinderella Alabang and Cinderella Megamall): A better and improved business model prioritizing lifestyle categories and not individual brands. The newly opened Cinderella San Lazaro is one of the first Cinderella 'Now' concept catering to the younger generation of Cinderella loyalists. These Cinderella 'Now' stores shall be the venue to highlight our growing private labels and brands.

In 2006, The Cinderella Group projects more than 30 percent growth from 2005's performance. CSSI, the imported division of Cinderella group is expected to maintain its momentum especially with the planned construction of an 850-square-meter Esprit flagship store in the early part of the year, new store openings for U2 and British India and Esprit in SM's Mall of Asia. New brands Rampage and Clarks will be in full gear opening each of their fourth and fifth stores in 2006.

Cinderella stores are targeted to improve its performance by 10 percent. Key levers of growth are: The implementation of the new business model of Cinderella stores, the development of private labels to be especially highlighted in our Cinderella 'Now' concept stores, new store openings in SM's Mall of Asia and other provincial sites and the building of a stronger corporate image. Cinderella North Mall in Glorietta will be our next big project and so far renovating a total of 7,800 square meters out of its current 13,000 square meters of space will definitely mark a milestone for the new Cinderella.

Elizabeth A. Reyes, president, Healthway Clinics

2005 was a great growth year for us at Healthway Medical and Clarity Aesthetic and Laser Center as we realized our objectives of increased healthy awareness among the general pbulics and widening our client base.

In spite of the difficult personal economies, our patients fully appreciated the importance of maintaining one's total health and well being and thus attain prevention of illness.

We are very bullish about 2006 as we seek various modes of expansion to better reach our target market.

Albert Garcia, president, Garsworth Marketing Corp.

C-Lium Fibre had a moving 2005 as the number one brand in the Natural Fibre Market. It set industry standards for product quality.

We have a positive outlook for 2006.

Committing to the commitment

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

AT 67, THOMAS EDISON WATCHED AS fire destroyed much of his work and equipment. Time to retire? Time to hang up the lab coat?

No way.

"All our mistakes are burned up," the inventor said. "Now we can start anew."

There is a time to retire, but Edison knew his time hadn't come. The fire that consumed his work didn't destroy the fire that burned within him to continue his work. Edison's commitment remained.

People tend to associate commitment with emotions. If they feel the right way, then they can follow through on their commitments. But true commitment doesn't work that way.

Commitment is not an emotion; it's a character quality that enables us to reach our goals.

Emotions go up and down all the time, but commitment must remain rock solid. A solid team—whether it's in business, sports, marriage or a volunteer organization—must have team players who are solidly committed to the team.

Let's look at four things every team player needs to know about being committed:

1. Commitment is usually discovered in the midst of adversity.

You never know the level of your commitment or that of a team player until things get tough. Every one of us could stay committed to a marriage if everything was always good.

Every one of us could stay committed to good health as long as we were healthy. The trick is to stay committed to the commitment when the economy takes a turn for the worse or when you lose your biggest account or when your plant burns to the ground.

Commitment, because it is a character trait, is revealed, not built, by adversity.

2. Commitment does not depend on gifts and abilities.

Commitment and talent, I have found, are unconnected. Many very talented people lack commitment. Many people who lack skills and talent are tremendously committed. So if you find somebody who's extremely talented, there is no guarantee that there is a high level of commitment.

For this reason, it becomes a great day when we connect talent with commitment—for ourselves and for those on the teams we lead. The moment that happens, the team goes to a whole new level.

3. Commitment results from choices, not conditions.

In writing about choices, Frederic Flach notes that most people look back on their lives and point to a specific time and place that marks a significant life change.

"Whether by accident or design," Flach writes, "there are the moments when, because of a readiness within us and a collaboration with events occurring around us, we are forced to seriously reappraise ourselves and the conditions under which we live and to make certain choices that will affect the rest of our lives."

Our commitment springs from those choices.

4. Commitment lasts when it is based on values.

Establishing commitment from a team is a critical piece of leadership, but leaders I work with are equally concerned about sustaining that commitment.

I've found the only way to sustain commitment is to link it with the personal values of an individual. Once your commitment is based on your values, you have no problem sustaining it.

Values are what drive your choices; they transcend your talents and skills and they stand up under the tests of adversity.

Commitment based on something other than solid values usually is a house of cards; when the wind kicks up, the house comes down.

Remember, commitment is not an emotion; it's a character quality that enables us to reach our goals.

(For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please email us at maxwell@inspire.ph or call 813-2732/03 and ask for Gina. Text MAXWELL ON to 4632 (Smart) to get daily SMS leadership insights from John Maxwell. God bless.)

Why and when, not just what and how

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Manuel Alcuaz Jr.

AS A NEW YEAR DAWNS, IT IS PERhaps useful to know how to handle the many decisions we will have to make in 2006.

It is my contention that we often end up making poor decisions because most of us tend to focus on the "what" and "how." We don't spend sufficient time trying to understand the "why" and "when."

I will illustrate my observations using the issue of the constitutional amendments, which all Filipino citizens eligible to vote should make up their minds about.

The Constitutional Commission that Gloria Macapagal Arroyo formed has focused from the start on changing our form of government from presidential, unitary, with a bicameral Congress to a unicameral parliamentary and federal form of government.

The worst justification for Constitutional change came from Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (GMA), who said the presidential and unitary system makes politicians corrupt.

We should examine whether it is the system or the people who cause corruption in the Presidential system.

Parliamentary vs Presidential

There are a number of true believers in the parliamentary form of government and they bring up a number of arguments.

The parliamentary government proponents claim that countries with parliamentary governments have developed faster than the Philippines. They frequently cite Thailand and Malaysia.

But those who argue for a Presidential form of government cite Korea and Taiwan. So we seem to have a stalemate. If one looks into each country more deeply one will see a more common factor that leads to their economic development: less corruption.

If one studies the failure of the Philippines one will note that over the years we have fallen from one of the most honest governments in the world to near the bottom of the list.

Those proposing a parliamentary form of government ague that under a parliamentary form of government, we will not have to go to the streets to overthrow a bad leader.

A vote of no confidence would be sufficient to change governments.

But a corrupt prime minister with many parliamentarians in his coalition would still be very difficult to overthrow.

The executive-legislative gridlock is blamed for our slow economic developments.

How many new laws do we really need? We have enough good ones and, unfortunately, a number of bad ones.

What the executive should do is to implement the good laws and recommend amendments for bad laws.

The judiciary should focus on streamlining its processes so that our citizens can look to the judicial system to get justice.

One of the reasons why Korea has become such an economic power is its effective judicial system. They have been able to quickly try and convict a few past presidents. Many of whom were generals, not just politicians.

I think that fusing the executive and the legislative is not the solution. Let us look into changes that will make each branch more effective and efficient.

The solution to the legislative gridlock is not the abolition of the Senate. It is the delegation, decentralization, or federalization of a lot of the local in nature work that has to currently pass through both houses of congress.

Most probably, it does not require constitutional change. The senate and the house should get together and pass a law delegating many of its nuisance responsibilities to the provinces, cities, and municipalities or perhaps to a historical names commission.

If Congress wants to retain its right to change some names and grant some franchises, it should do so by exception rather than by retaining the entire burden.

In business, we follow the practice of delegation and decentralization and letting those in the best position to make a decision do so.

We don't make top management make decisions for which they don't have the required time and information to decide wisely.

Abolition of the Senate

If one looks beyond the legislative gridlock argument, the real reason why many trapos want to get rid of the Senate is because it stands in the way of more anomalies.

Unfortunately, we cannot depend on our judicial system to run after the crooks and the scoundrels.

The last defense of the people against corrupt government is a nationally elected Senate.

In government as well as in business management, there is a need for geographical as well as functional distribution of authority and responsibility.

We already have a decentralized framework of government. However, local governments are frequently hampered by delays in the releases of their Internal Revenue Allotments.

As a result, local governments are unable to move forward with their initiatives and are forced to toe the line of the President to get the money that is due them.

If the parliamentary system really was that much better, then we should make the transition immediately after its ratification. The 2007 elections would be a good time to do so.

What is strange is that the GMA Constitutional Commission now wants to have no elections in 2007. Extend all terms to 2010 and transition in 10 years.

This really raises serious questions. Did the Commission really consider what would be best for the country?

Or did they spend all that time and money to come out with what is good for GMA.

It is time that we think about what is good for the country. It is time for politicians to sacrifice for the country and stop thinking of themselves alone. Definitely, robbing the people of the right to make a choice in 2007 is a very bad idea.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is co-chair of the MAP ICT committee and president of Systems Sciences Consult Inc. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

E-mail: pr_info_tech@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Leo Magno
Text us your feedback: inquirer it name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

3G in RP: Looking back and looking ahead

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

FINALLY, THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS Commission (NTC) has announced that four—and not five as earlier stated in its rules and regulations—operators have been granted government licenses to operate third-generation (3G) mobile networks.

Three incumbents and one new player are expected to battle it out next year, as they leap into the next-generation of mobile phone service where mobile Internet, multimedia and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services are also expected to be offered.

While the interest in 3G has somehow waned in recent years, save for the strong opposition by local operators to jump into this so-called "network upgrade," industry pundits believe that 3G will eventually happen in the country. It is only a question of when 3G services will become mainstream.

Smart Communications Inc., the wireless subsidiary of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., said it has started rapidly deploying its 3G mobile network nationwide following the awarding of 3G frequencies by the NTC.

The mobile operator demonstrated earlier its own 3G service in Cebu through a video call to Manila, and to a roaming international subscriber of Telecom Italia Mobile. Rival Globe Telecom also made its own 3G test at this year's national advertising congress, signaling that the battle was on.

These 3G tests were made months after lawyers of both companies insisted that the country is not yet ready for 3G. Both mobile operators, who now control majority of the local market for mobile phone services, said deploying 3G was too costly for them. They also argued that 3G handsets were still expensive and only a few people could afford it.

However, as the lawyers tried to fend off competition that is expected to come from newer players, Smart and Globe joined the bidding for 3G licenses, which was initiated by the NTC despite strong opposition from the incumbents. On the afternoon of Dec. 28, 2005, the NTC issued its decision, saying that Smart, Globe, Digital Telecommunications and Connectivity Unlimited Resources Enterprises Inc. (Cure) were all being granted 3G licenses.

Smart and Globe have issued separate statements revealing that 3G tests have been ongoing prior to the granting of the government licenses.

"We have been testing a number of 3G cell sites and can now service customers on a trial basis in Metro Manila and Metro Cebu. What's more, we have already ordered the network facilities needed to establish nationwide 3G coverage at the shortest possible time," Smart president and CEO Napoleon Nazareno said.

Nazareno vowed that Smart would repeat the rapid rollout that the operator accomplished in deploying its analog and GSM network infrastructure.

"We are in 3G for real," the Smart executive added.

After getting a perfect score on a grading system used by the NTC to gauge the capability of local operators to massively and effectively provide 3G services, Smart was assigned the 15 Megahertz radio frequency band allocation, the company said.

> 3G took a lot of turns and passed many speed bumps down the road leading toward the Philippines

Globe, on the other hand, was granted the 10 Mhz band, the company noted in a separate statement.

"We are bullish about this new development in our company as we get ready to provide the 3G applications that would greatly benefit our valued customers. This year, we extensively worked on our 3G offering. Globe successfully completed its first 3G video calls in July and has complied with all the NTC's 3G requirements by October (2005)," said Rodolfo Salalima, Globe senior vice president for corporate and regulatory affairs.

Meanwhile, Smart insisted that the company had started preparations for a seamless transition to 3G as early as five years ago.

Smart in cooperation with Nokia Networks conducted the first successful 3G video call in the country in the presence of NTC officials in 2000. Using experimental equipment, this test call recorded data transfer rates of up to 216.9 kbps, the company said.

Rolando Peña, head of Smart's network services division, said the company has made preparations for the easy migration to 3G.

"The installation of this modular GSM equipment fits neatly into Smart's overall 3G preparations. Now that the 3G equipment is available, the 3G capability of these base stations can be readily activated, greatly simplifying the rollout of 3G infrastructure," Nazareno added.

3G provides faster transmission speeds that make possible high bandwidth applications such as video calls and video streaming. Browsing the Internet and downloading large files would be faster when using 3G, as this technology offers full mobility.

A recent survey by the Global mobile Suppliers Association indicated that there are now 100 3G/WCDMA networks in 42 countries worldwide.

WCDMA is one of the global standards which enable the provision of enhanced mobile multimedia services such as music, TV, video, rich entertainment content and Internet access.

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Virus makers got wiser in 2005

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

AUTHORS OF MALICIOUS SOFTWARE—viruses, Trojan horses, and worms—began wising up in 2005 as recorded malicious applications were being spread for profiteering and scamming, according to software security maker Trend Micro.

Trend Micro also predicts more such attacks in 2006 as malware authors are lured by increased worldwide usage of the Internet and new social engineering techniques to take advantage of for their purposes.

Despite predictions of rampant worm attacks in 2006, the company admitted that the only prominent trend was the more criminal malware-for-profit. Many of these attacks were launched through phishing, i.e. sending spam e-mail that seem to have come from a legitimate source but are really an attempt by scammers to capture personal data.

Both phishing and Trojan horses consist of gathering account information, user names, and passwords for bank, e-mail, online gaming and online shopping accounts, Trend Micro said. A critical scam approach is capturing important files or data by aiming at persons with a company or government office.

In such cases, authors of phishing e-mail have also learned to lessen the chances of detection by moving or killing their phishing sites in a few days. Trojan horses, on the other hand, can remain undetected in a computer for longer periods and continue sending private information.

Trend warns that Trojan horses could become more specialized and are less likely to be discovered, prompting malware authors to continue making more Trojan horses than viruses or worms, most of which are easily detected and eradicated.

"By combining these elements: the promise of illicit profit from spammers and phishers, and the fallibility of human trust from worms, the malware authors of today have achieved what the first Trojan horse ever did: not content with destroying the city, now it is looting coffers everywhere."

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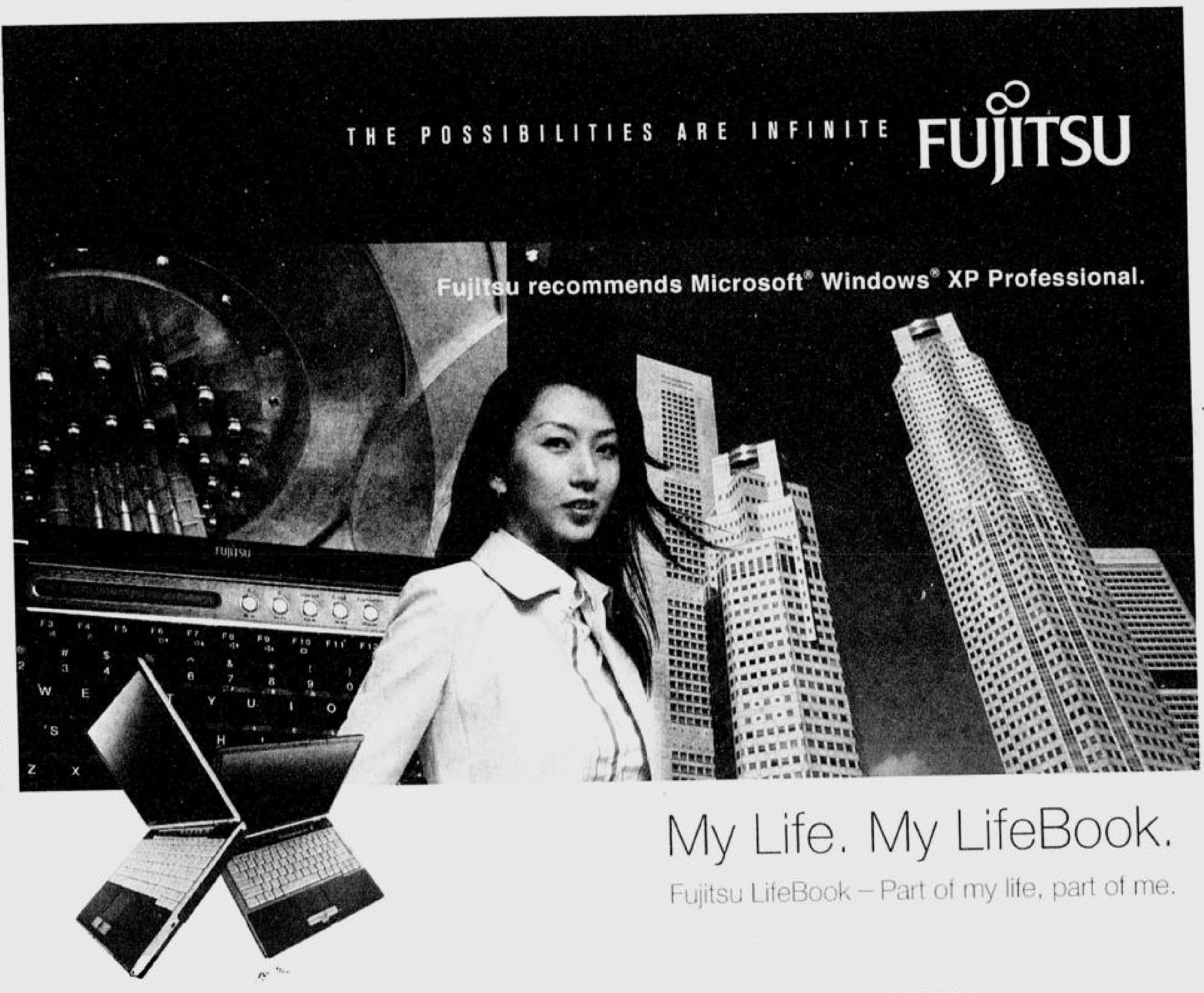

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(Sgd.) **EDITA S. BUENO**
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Region VII, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

GRAINS HANDLING SERVICES FOR NFA CEBU

HANDLING SERVICES OF 644,000 BAGS GRAINS STOCKS WITHIN NFA WAREHOUSES

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY**, through its *Corporate Budget for 2006* intends to apply the sum of *ONE MILLION NINE HUNDRED THIRTY TWO THOUSAND PESOS (P1,932,000.00)* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for Grains Handling Services for Cebu of NFA Region VII. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY** now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for Grains Handling Services of NFA Region VII. Delivery of the GOODS is required upon receipt of Notice to Proceed until December 31, 2006, or upon completion of the services for the volume of 644,000 bags, whichever is applicable. The grains handling services comprise the following:

PROVINCE	LOT #	LOCATION	VOLUME (bags of 50 kg)	ABC (P)
CEBU	1	BOGO	168,000	504,000.00
	2	BADIAN	154,000	462,000.00
	3	STA. FE	168,000	504,000.00
	4	TUDELA	154,000	462,000.00
		TOTAL	*644,000*	*1,932,000.00*

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instructions to Bidders (ITB). The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY and inspect the Bidding Documents at *NFA, Banilad, Cebu City* starting January 02 to January 10, 2006 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Biders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of *Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00)*. The method of payment will be in cash. The Bidding Documents shall be reviewed personally by the prospective Bidder or his duly authorized representative.

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY** will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on *January 11, 2006 @ 10:00 a.m.* at *NFA Training Center, 3rd Flr., Banilad, Cebu City*. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on *January 24, 2006 not later than 10:00 a.m.* All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in an amount at least equal to, and not lower than a percentage of the Approved Budget for the Contract to be bid, in the following schedule and form or any combination thereof:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of ABC to be bid
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Bid opening shall be on *January 24, 2006 @ 10:00 a.m.* at *NFA Training Center, 3rd Flr., Banilad, Cebu City*. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend the bidding. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders

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Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region VII, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

GRAINS TRUCKING SERVICES FOR NFA CEBU

TRUCKING SERVICES OF 732,000 BAGS GRAINS STOCKS TO NFA WAREHOUSES

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY**, through its *Corporate Budget for 2006* intends to apply the sum of *TWO HUNDRED NINETY FOUR THOUSAND PESOS (P294,000.00)* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract of Grains Trucking Services for Cebu, Bohol, Negros Oriental and Siquijor of NFA Region VII. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY** now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for Grains Trucking Services of NFA Region VII. Delivery of the GOODS is required upon receipt of Notice to Proceed until December 31, 2006, or upon completion of the services for the volume of 84,000 bags, whichever is applicable. The grains trucking services comprise the following:

Province	Source of Stocks	Destinaton	Minimum # of Trucks	Volume (bags in 50 kg)	ABC (P)
Cebu	Cebu	Sta. Fe	6 (10-wheeler)	84,000	294,000.00

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instructions to Bidders (ITB) The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY and inspect the Bidding Documents at *NFA, Banilad, Cebu City* starting January 02 to January 11, 2006 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Biders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of *Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00)*. The method of payment will be in cash The Bidding Documents shall be reviewed personally by the prospective Bidder or his duly authorized representative

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY** will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on *January 11, 2006 @ 2:00 p.m.* at *NFA Training Center, 3rd Flr., Banilad, Cebu City*. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on *January 24, 2006 not later than 2:00 p.m.* All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in an amount at least equal to, and not lower than a percentage of the Approved Budget for the Contract to be bid, in the following schedule and form or any combination thereof:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of ABC to be bid
Cash/Cashier's/Manager's Check payable to NFA issued by a reputable commercial bank in Cebu City or	One Percent (1%)
Surety Bond issued by GSIS marked "Callable on Demand"	Two & a Half Percent (2.5%)

Bid opening shall be on *January 24, 2006 @ 2:00 p.m.* at *NFA Training Center, 3rd Flr., Banilad, Cebu City*. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend the bidding. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
PIOLITO C. SANTOS
Banilad, Cebu City
032-2321939
email address: nfaro7@cvis.net.ph
032-2336095
website: www.nfacebu.net.ph

(Sgd.) **PIOLITO C. SANTOS**
RBAC Chairman/ARD

(PDI - Jan. 2 & 9, 2006)

NFA sets seminar on HACCP-Based on-Farm/Food Safety Programs

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY'S FOOD DEVELOPMENT Center (FDC) will conduct a seminar workshop on "Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)-Based on-Farm/Food Safety Programs" on Jan. 24-to 25, at the Food Development Center Compound, FTI Complex, Tagig City. Under a farm-to-table food safety approach, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles encouraged allocation of prevention and control resources at the most Critical Control Points (CCP's) throughout the food chain continuum. Growers, farmers, plant managers, production supervisors, food safety managers, food inspectors, regulatory personnel, plant personnel, sanitarians, food microbiologists and analysts, and persons who are involved in HACCP plan development and implementation are enjoined to attend. The principal lecturer for the seminar workshop is Dr. Manuel M. Garcia, a former senior research scientist of the Animal Diseases Research Institute, Agriculture Canada and an internationally recognized microbiologist and food safety expert. The course fee is P5,200.00 per person. For further inquiries, contact Amelia S. Bautista, Food Development Center, National Food Authority, FTI Complex, Tagig City at tel. nos. 838-4014 to 16; 838-4601; 838-4478 and fax nos. 838-4016-17 and 838-4692.

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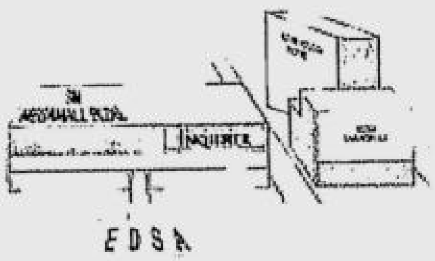

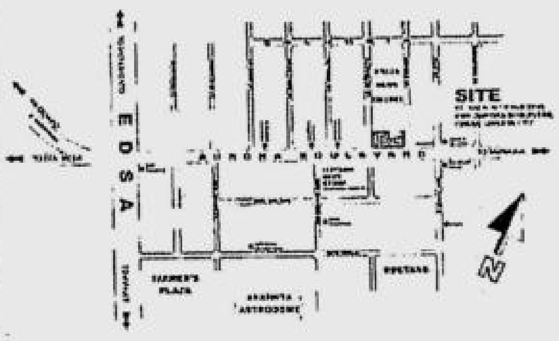

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DR. NESTOR MERCADO FELICIANO

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We join his wife **Sonia**,
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children and grandchildren,
in-laws and other relatives
in their prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains will lie in state at The Heritage Park Mortuary and Crematory, Bayani Road Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City until January 2, 2006.

He will then be brought to Misamis University, Ozamiz City where he will remain until January 6, 2006. A Mass will be offered for the eternal repose of his soul at the lower chapel of the Christ The King Parish Church along Green Meadows Drive, Quezon City, on January 8, 2006 at 8:00 a.m.

Interment will immediately follow at the Christ the King Parish Crypt.

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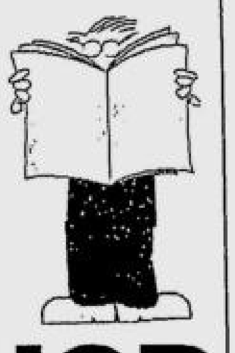

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CITY GOVERNMENT OF LEGAZPI
City Hall Compound, Legazpi City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Legazpi, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites suppliers / manufacturers / distributors / contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below.

ITB No.	Item Description	Approved Budget
	A. Waste Collection Equipment	P 35,000,000.00

A. Waste Collection Equipment
  1.0 Two (2) Ea. CAB CHASSIS
    Forward control, 4x2, 6-Cylinder 4 cycle
  2.0 Two (2) Ea. Refuse Collection
    System and Ejection System to be
    Mounted on the 15,000 kg. GVW
    Cab truck Chassis
      2.1 BODY VOLUME 13.0 CBM Minimum
      2.2 HYDRAULIC EQUIPMENT(s)
B. Garbage Bins
    Materials-Plastic, Fiberglass,
    Galvanized steel, Sizes- Ranges from
    140,240.360 liters, 1.0.1 1CBM
    Quantity From 160 pcs. to 600 pcs.
    Depending upon the size of each BIN (vol.)
C. TRACK TYPE WADER
    Powered by 4 cylinder water cooled,
    4 stroke cycle diesel engine developing
    a minimum 100kw Flywheel Power
    Torque 680 N.M

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check / Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

Bidding for the above requirement are scheduled on January 25, 2006 at BAC Conference Room, City Engineer's Office, Legazpi City and pertinent Bid Documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat, City Hall Compound, Legazpi City upon payment of a non refundable fee of Twenty One Thousand (P 21,000.00).

Interested suppliers are requested to submit their Letter of Intent (LOI) on January 6, 2006 and to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on January 13, 2006 at the BAC Conference Room, City Engineer's Office, Legazpi City.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

CITY GOVERNMENT OF LEGAZPI reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the City Government.

The Chairman
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI - Dec 25, 2005 & Jan. 2, 2006)

Standard Form Number: SF-GOOD-05
Revised on: July 28, 2004

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF LA UNION
City of San Fernando

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION**, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contract:

NAME OF CONTRACT	LOCATION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT	CONTRACT DURATION
1. DRUGS & MEDICINES	Provincial Capitol Building, City of San Fernando, La Union	Purchases of Drugs & Medicines, Medical/Surgical Laboratory Supplies and Reagents, Dental, X-Ray and Ortho for LUMC and District Hospitals	P 12,554,882 95	180 CD
2. MEDICAL/SURGICAL			P 6,508,325 75	180 CD
3. LABORATORY			P 1,803,249 00	180 CD
4. DENTAL			P 160,654 50	180 CD
5. X-RAY			P 532,543 00	180 CD
6. ORTHO			P 149,110 00	180 CD

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities		Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents		January 6, 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference		January 11, 2006, 9:00 AM
3 Opening of Bids	a. Drugs and Medicines	January 30, 2006, 9:00 AM, Diego Silang Hall, Provincial Capitol, SFC
	b. Medical/Surgical	January 31, 2006, 9:00 AM
	c. Laboratory	February 01, 2006, 9:00 AM
	d. Dental	February 01, 2006, 1:00 PM
	e. X-Ray	February 01, 2006, 1:00 PM
	f. Ortho	February 01, 2006, 1.00 PM
4. Bid Evaluation		February 02 to February 16, 2006
5 Post-Qualification		February 02 to February 16, 2006
6 Notice of Award		February 02 to February 16, 2006

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P5,000.00 to the Office of the Provincial Treasurer's Cashier.

The **PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION** assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) DR. GEOFFREY S. TILAN
BAC Chairman

Contact Person:

(Sgd.) MS. CATHERINE E. FRANCO
BAC TWG Chairman/Assistant Provincial Budget Officer
Tel. No. (072) 700-5300

(PDI - Jan. 2 & 9, 2006)

Rice retailers urge lifting of NFA rice import tariffs

THE REGIONAL CHAPTER OF THE CONfederation of Grains Retailers Association of the Philippines Inc (Grecon) in Region VIII together with the provincial chapters in Zambales and Davao del Sur are asking the government to make the National Food Authority the sole rice importer for food security stocks and exempt the agency from paying tariffs on its rice imports. In their resolution addressed to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and the members of the Lower House and the Senate, the Grecon said that lifting payment of the NFA's tariff duties will allow the agency to efectively perform its food security mandate and to continue to sell government rice at a level affordable to ordinary consumers, especially the poor. The retailers' group stressed that NFA's tariff obligations affect the agency's food security program and its price stabilization function aside from draining the agency's finances. The association is composed of NFA-accredited rice retailers, numbering 80,000 nationwide. Being the NFA's grains marketing arm, Grecon said their association serves as the primary conduit of affordable government rice to consumers assuring price and supply stability in the local market. This scheme allows the rice retailing sector to substantially contribute in sustaining the country's economy. There is a need for the NFA to regulate rice distribution not only of local rice but also the imported stocks to preempt rice price manipulation in the local market, according to the Grecon. For more information on NFA programs, the public may send their inquiries via the Text NFA Program through mobile number 0917-6210927.

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Northern Samar Electric Cooperative, Inc.
NORSAMELCO
Brgy. Magsaysay, Bobon, Northern Samar
MOBILE (0917)3619744 • E-mail: Norsamelco@Yahoo.com • Fax: (055)251-8183

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Northern Samar Electric Cooperative Incorporation (NORSAMELCO) invites interested suppliers to participate in Public Bidding for the supply, delivery, installation and commissioning of one (1) unit Brand New 10 MVA Sub-station to be constructed at Catarman N. Samar.

Prospective bidders has the financial, technical, production and after sales service capability necessary to perform the contract. And have completed the similar project.

Interested bidders must submit their pre-qualification document as follows:

- Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws
- SEC or DTI Registration as appropriate
- BIR or VAT Certificate
- Audited Financial Statement for the current year duly received by BIR
- Business Permit for the current year
- List of similar project or contract (i.e. name, address, tel. no, amount, date and year completed)

After submission of the above requirement, Bid Documents may be obtained at the PBAC Secretary during office hour starting Jan. 3, 2006 to Jan. 14, 2006 and upon payment of non-refundable fee amounting to P5,500.00

A pre-bid conference will be held on January 24, 2006 at 10am and submission of a sealed bid is on February 21, 2006. Opening of bids will be held on February 22, 2006 at 10am NORSAMELCO main office.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of Cash, Manager's Check in the amount equivalent to one percent (1%) or Bidder's Bond in the amount equivalent to Two and Half percent (2.5%) of the total bid price.

NORSAMELCO reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any minor defect therein and accept the bids considered most advantageous and responsive to coop.

(Sgd.) HENRY C. BANJAWAN
PBAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) SALVADOR G. HERNANDEZ
General Manager

(PDI - Jan. 2, 2006)

Stock market watchers bullish on prospects for '06

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE YEAR 2005 WAS QUITE stormy for the Philippine stock market after being rocked by political conflicts and rising oil prices.

But market analysts, encouraged by a number of companies expected to brave the market, are bullish on the prospects for 2006.

"We are positive on the stock market. There is a lot of liquidity, from both retail and institutional investors, and we expect new IPOs by February," BDO Securities president Eduardo Francisco said.

Despite the present conditions, online broker 2Trade Asia sees a buoyant market starting January as fund managers scout for better-yielding sectors that are seen to outperform the market in 2006.

"Most may have already factored-in improved economic data, starting with government's firm thrust to balance the budget," Grace Cerdenia of 2Trade Asia wrote in a report.

"Financials, property, energy/utilities, mining and commodity-related shares as well as those engaged in IT-outsourcing services may be favored, as these are likely to obtain either improved share or consistency in demand," she said.

She also said in a separate corporate outlook report that, as far as consumer-listed firms are concerned, mergers and acquisitions will continue to be the main theme.

In 2005, consumer blue chip San Miguel Corp. bought Australian dairy giant National Foods Ltd., Berri Ltd. and is now bidding for Del Monte Pacific Ltd. with the Campos Group.

Jollibee Foods Corp., the country's largest fast food chain, continues to be aggressive as well in acquisitions. Pancake House is also another company to watch out for with its recent acquisition of Dencio's bar and grill restaurant and Japanese quick-service restaurant Teriyaki Boy.

With respect to the power sector, 2TradeAsia projects that more investments in power generation will be required in the next three to five years as power demand is seen to swell by up to 9 percent until 2015.

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) for one bid out six plants, generating around $567 million in revenues. Included in the sale was the 600-megawatt coal-fired Masinloc plant to the YNN Pacific consortium.

To date, five hydropower plants have been turned over to new investors. The second round of bidding for the 600-megawatt Calaca plant has also started and may possibly be awarded to a new investor this year.

First Generation Holdings Inc. of the Lopez Group is also poised to raise funds via an initial public offering to bid for state power projects.

Power sector reforms also need to be accelerated. So far, regulators have deferred at least 70 percent of the sale of generation companies and transmission assets to the first quarter of 2006. The setting up of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market was also moved to 2006.

Among the key issues that need to be threshed out include resolving the transition supply contract with power buyers and other mechanics to make these contracts attractive, 2TradeAsia wrote.

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$40M worth of loans for microfinancing OKd

Boosting businesses, job creation in rural areas

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS HAS approved the government's plan to take out up to $40 million worth of foreign loans to fund microfinance programs in the rural areas and infrastructure projects in Mindanao.

BSP Governor Amando M. Tetangco Jr. said the Monetary Board, the BSP's policy-making body, approved last week an $18.63-million loan intended to support microenterprises in the provinces.

The loan will come from the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and will be used to provide credit to microenterprises in rural areas. The loan was intended to complement the Arroyo administration's agenda of generating more jobs including those generated by micro-businesses.

The loan proceeds will be given to the Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corp. (SBGFC), an attached agency of the Department of Finance tasked with providing credit access to micro, small and medium enterprises.

Tetangco said the credit facility to be created by the loan would be made available to microenterprises in places like the Cordillera region, Sorsogon, Cotabato, Sarangani, General Santos, Caraga, Bicol and Eastern Visayas.

The central bank chief said the loan will have a 40-year maturity and will be interest-free. It will, however, carry a yearly service charge of 0.75 percent, he added.

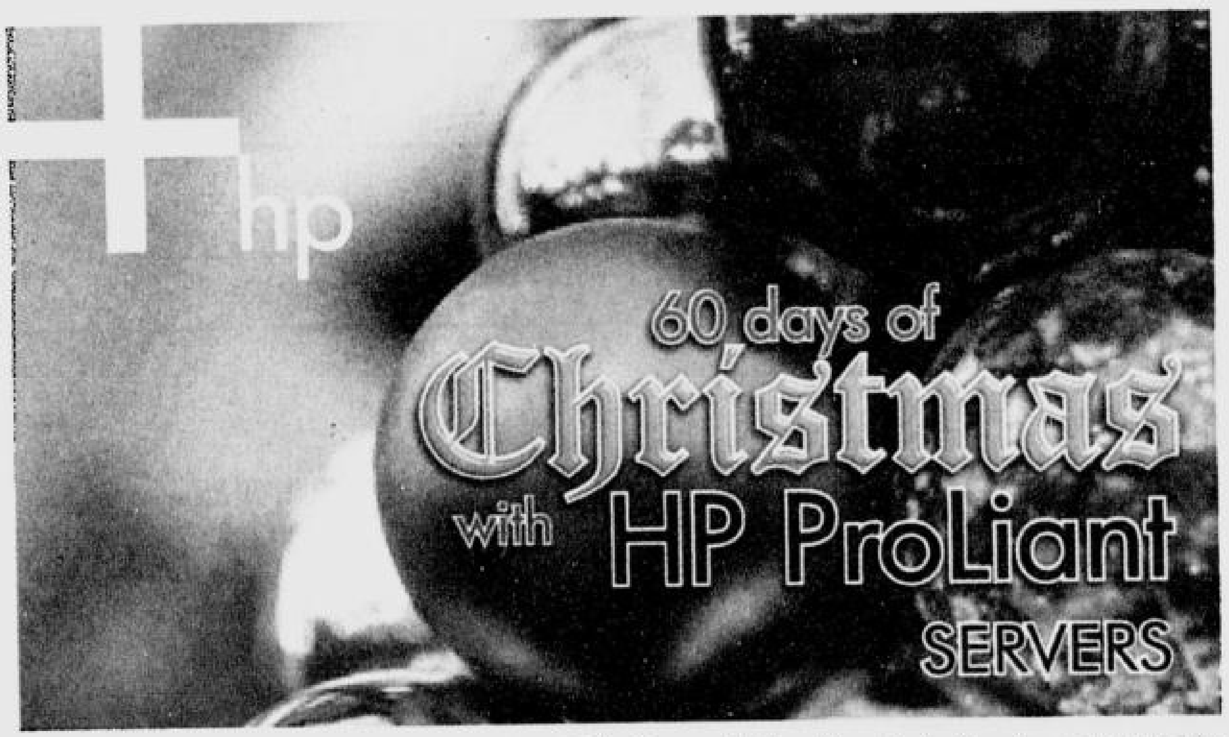
The Monetary Board likewise approved the undertaking of a $20-million loan extended by the Saudi government to the Philippines to help finance infrastructure development projects in Mindanao, particularly in Cotabato and Lanao provinces.

Tetangco said this loan would carry a 25-year maturity and an interest of 2 percent per year.

Aside from the estimated $40 million loan already approved by the Monetary Board, another $25 million worth of credit will be formally approved by the central bank's policy-making body.

Tetangco said members of the Monetary Board had already approved in principle the undertaking of a $25-million loan from the Sumitomo-Mitsui Banking Corp. to facilitate the regular importation by the National Food Authority (NFA).

He said the NFA loan would be used to pay for rice importation made in 2005 and additional importation this year.



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What do we do with a problem like Fidel Ramos?

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

FIDEL RAMOS SIMPLY CANNOT STOP TALKing against President Arroyo. I am not a rabid Arroyo fan, but any ex-President should keep his mouth shut about the incumbent.

The former surely has left some skeletons in a Malacañang closet, which the latter can easily dig out and expose for everyone to see.

Ramos is fond of saying that he is just like an elder brother who wants to help. But his brotherly stance actually undercuts the President.

Ramos makes it appear that she cannot run the country without his help. In fact, he sometimes acts as if he were a co-President. Last July, at the height of the impeachment problem, Ramos rushed to the President's side. He was again by her side at the opening rites of the SEA games.

Yet, Ramos is hardly the man to give advice on how to run the country. He was not a hotshot President.

Throughout his six-year presidency, Ramos raised the entire range of taxes in the internal revenue code. But he gave taxpayers like himself a tax break. He raised the value added tax to 10 percent. But he exempted about a hundred previously taxable items.

He built a twenty-kilometer road and a water system in Camp Abubakar, the MILF's stronghold. The camp became virtually an independent republic. President Estrada, in one of his best decisions, found it necessary to order the armed forces to run over and clear the camp.

Ramos, the most outstanding veteran alive, signed a law that granted old age pensions to veterans over 70 years of age. But the law was a sham. It was never funded. Today, the government owes the veterans an estimated P10 billion.

A Ramos flagship project was to build 1.2 million low-cost housing units all over the country. But the national government did not have the money for the grandiose plan.

Ramos ordered SSS, GSIS and Pag-Ibig to put up the funds. Four years into the plan, the project was in shambles. Less than half of the units were built. Many buyers refused to keep up with the payments on their poorly-built units. Tens of billions in pension funds have been irretrievably lost.

The SSS was a favorite milking cow. Ramos ordered the SSS to sink billions into the centennial expo at Clark Field, although the payback period was 17 long years. The SSS buckles under P30 billion in low-cost housing loans which can no longer be collected.

The Ramos presidency was not free of scandal. Remember the Amari deal that reclaimed Manila bay along Roxas Boulevard?

In the last year of his term, Ramos tried to extend his presidency. Remember the signature campaign? When the plan could not get off the ground, his party authorized him to name his successor.

He drew up a long list, then a short list, of prospective candidates. In the end, he anointed Jose de Venecia who had threatened to dig up some skeletons if he were not chosen.

The presidential campaign against Joseph Estrada was incredibly inept. Crisscrossing the archipelago, Ramos trumpeted that JDV was the best man to carry on the Ramos economic policies.

The result was the mother of all defeats. Estrada won in the largest landslide in 50 years. At the same time, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo ran away with the vice presidential race.

The 1998 presidential election was more a terrible debacle for Ramos than a stirring victory for Estrada.

Ramos now endorses the shift to the parliamentary system. In spite of his vigorous denial, it is widely believed that Ramos sees the parliamentary system as his way back to power.

But to be the first prime minister in Philippine history is a pipe dream. Ramos cannot win a seat in any of the districts in his home province of Pangasinan. De Venecia and the other incumbent congressmen there stand in the way.

Ramos now threatens to withdraw his support for President Arroyo if, by New Year's Day, she does not reject the ConCom's recommendation to scrap next year's elections.

What support is Ramos talking about? Out of power for eight years, he no longer has a constituency. No retired general, not even Tuny Abat, has rallied to his side. The military brass in the active service has asked that the AFP be left alone. He has little support in Pangasinan. He is all alone.

Ramos' antics are a desperate attempt to remain in the limelight. It is a pathetic sight.

Kapal ng orig,
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Islander

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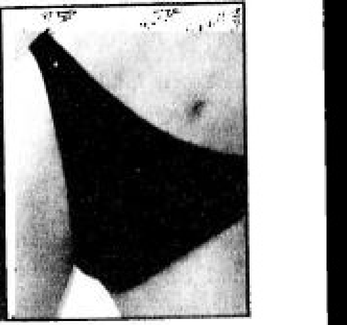
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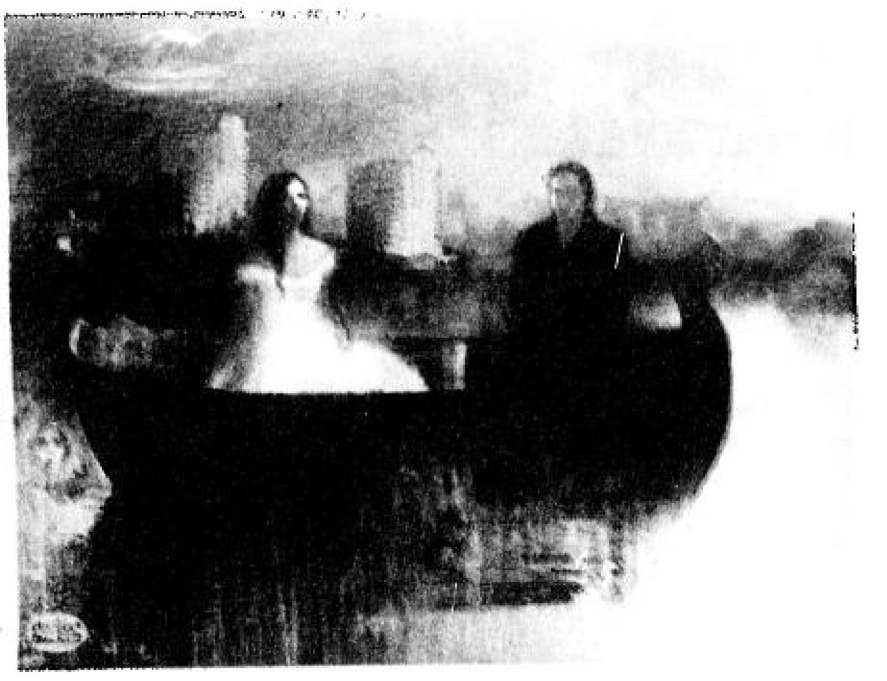
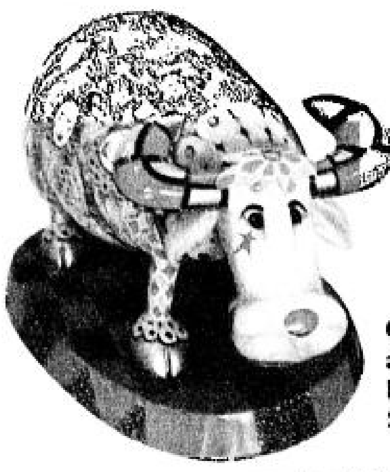
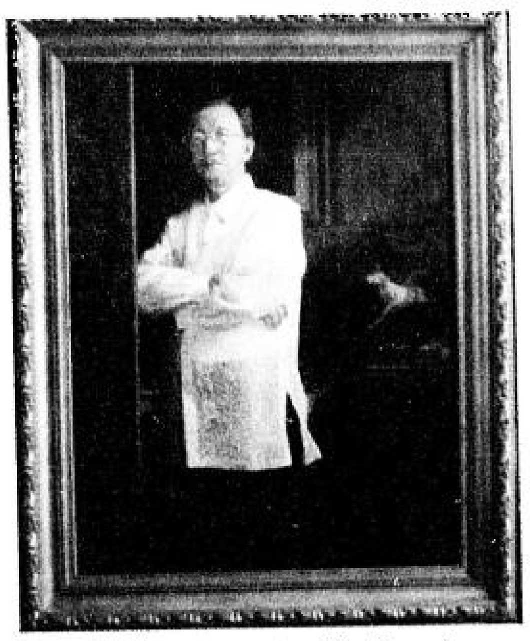
The best and the worst of Philippine art in 2005


C.J. Tañedo's "The Sacred and The Profane"

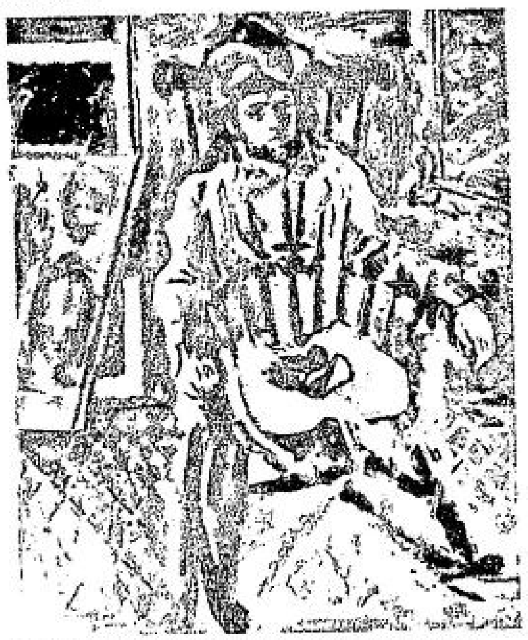

GUYITO artwork by Bin Samonte

Guyito makeovers. Hot-selling artists Malang and Bencab led established and emergent artists in interpreting Guyito, the carabao mascot created by Jess Abrera for the INQUIRER. To mark the paper's 20th anniversary, they painted over 20 Guyito fiberglass sculptures by Sajid Imao and the result was creative ferment at its best. The Guyitos will be installed in reading corners and school libraries all over the country as mascots promoting literacy and the reading habit among the young. Joining Malang and Bencab were Kidlat Tahimik, Jack Salud, Ernesto Patricio, Steve Santos, Lydia Velasco, Fernando Sena, Salvador Convocar, Soler, Cana, Bing Siochi, Roel Obemio, Tres Roman, Wilfredo Offemaria, Bin Samonte, Jef Samonte, Romeo Forbes, Rex Tatlonghari and Anton Balao.

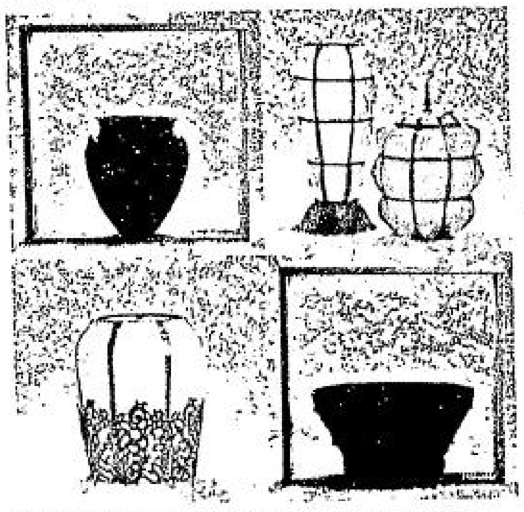

"PORTRAIT of Eddie Chua," by Romulo Galicano

Romulo Galicano winning the grand prize in the international portrait contest of the Portrait Society of America. His portrait of his friend Eddie Chu earned plaudits from such acclaimed artists as John Liberace, John Howard Sanden and Bart Lindstrom.

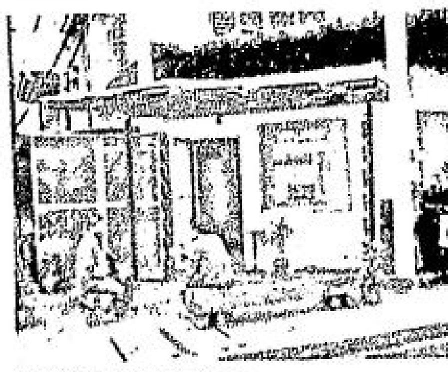
The three-part Federico Alcuaz retrospective at Ayala Museum. Curated by Rod. Paras-Perez, it reaffirmed Alcuaz's contributions to Philippine art. The coffee-table book, edited also by Paras-Perez, is an intelligent yet colorful survey of the artist's variegated works.


"SELF-PORTRAITS," by Federico Aguilar Alcuaz

Well-curated shows. More and more galleries and museums have come up with well-conceptualized shows, such as Renato Agustin Ong's "Archaelogy" at the UP Vargas Museum, the annual "Zero-In" at Lopez Museum, Ayala Museum, Ateneo Gallery and Museo Pambata, the Ronald Ventura show at Ateneo, the series showing the collection of the National Museum, the various exhibits at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the Metropolitan Museum, the various shows at West Gallery, the "Kristo" exhibit by various artists at Gallery Nine, and "dog/god" by the Thomasian Young Artists Circle at the UST Museum, CCP and Iloilo Arts Center.


"ARCHAEOLOGY," by Renato Agustin Ong

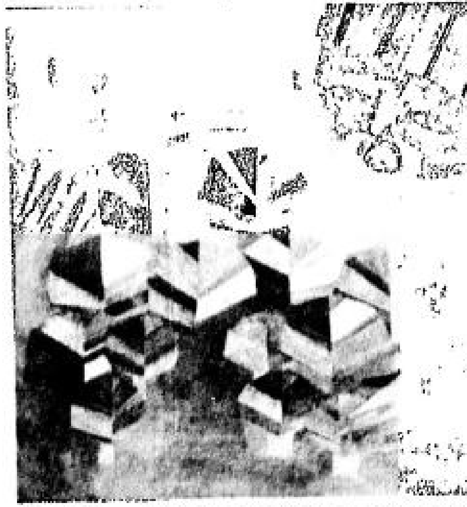
Alternative art spaces, such as Blueroom (Bangkal, Makati), Avellana Art Gallery (Harrison Street, Pasay), UFO (Samal Street, Mandaluyong), and even Mag:Net (ABS-CBN in Quezon City and Paseo Center in Makati). Their rise means providing art-lovers and consumers with options other than the malls, which however continue to be the primary engine for the art market.

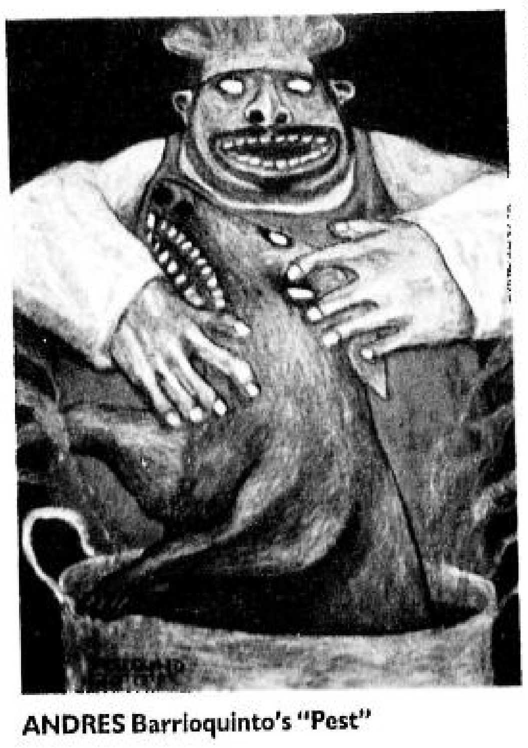

BLUEROOM Gallery

Hot-selling young artists barely out of fine-arts school. Romeo Forbes had a sold-out show of the large-scale works he created for the children's book, "Elias and His Trees." Leonardo Aguinaldo, winner of the Philip Morris prize, also had a well-received show at Hiraya. Andres Barrioquinto, winner of the Nokia prize, was a hit in Singapore. He also joined Wesley Valenzuela, Jaime Pacena II, Buen Calubaya, CJ Tañedo, Lawrence Borsoto, Lindslee and Ivan Roxas in the critically acclaimed group show, "dog/god," which toured around the country.

Web Gising. The digital art contest by the National Committee on the Visual Arts of the NCCA was a boost to the nascent art form in the Philippines.

THE BEST/ C2


"ELIAS and His Trees," by Romeo Forbes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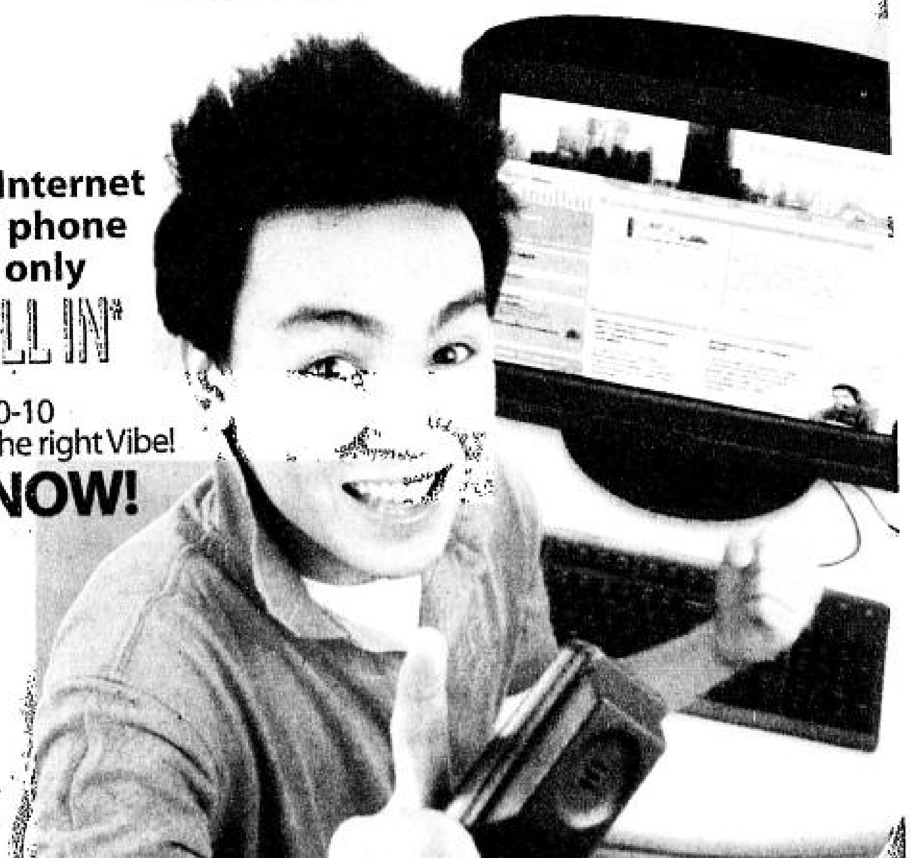
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Art booms and busts

By Constantino C. Tejero

AS IN YEARS PAST, this one has seen what is good and what is bad in the visual arts in the country.

First, there is an art boom, which can be gauged by the proliferation of art galleries and exhibits. And new artists are emerging from the woodwork by the dozens.

Second, it is at that time of the year when art is suddenly made available to all. It has now become regular for some galleries to offer as their yearender exhibits of small pieces by masters and upcoming masters at bargain-floor prices.

West Gallery at the Artwalk, L/4, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, and in its main gallery in Mary Santos Artcade at 48 West Ave., Quezon City, is presenting "12 x 9," an exhibit of over a hundred paintings in 12" x 9" format by 63 artists.

Ordinary gallery-goers can now shop for high-grade art at a steal, such as Rolly Acuña's oil on canvas for P2,500. Expectedly, the steepest are pieces by a National Artist like Arturo Luz, who sells his acrylic on canvas of the same size for P48,000. Or of Roberto Chabet, who, of course, doesn't sell his art.

Third, the avant-garde is alive and well in the local art world, as exemplified by Chabet's mystifying art installations, Gabby Barredo's bizarre kinetic sculptures, and radical artworks and happenings by brash young artists, particularly those from the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts.

Fourth, international art keeps coming to the country, facilitated by institutions such as Ayala Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Alliance Française, and vanguard art galleries like Finale and Galeria Duemilla. This encourages the interaction of local and foreign artists, further enriching Philippine art.

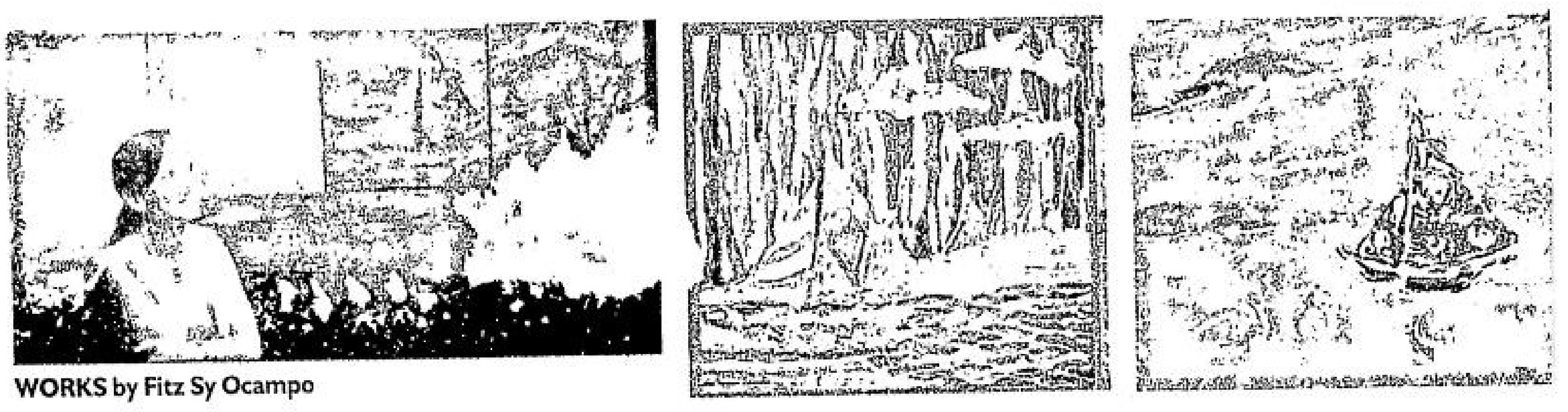
Fifth, the rise of community art as exemplified by the Organization of Banglos Sculptors, and the championing of regional art and indigenous culture by brave galleries like Hiraya. These demonstrate that art really belongs to the people.

On the downsides, first, some galleries and even museums don't know how to properly handle or take care of artworks. Space and budgetary constraints have forced them to stack freshly painted canvases at the backroom after the exhibit closes, or, without air-conditioning, let masterpieces by Old Masters gather dust and mildew in the basement.

Second, the cropping up of facile art, from conceptual installations to happenings to naïfs.

Third, the commodification of art by an increasingly consumerist Philippine society. A generation ago, the young wanted to become lawyers or doctors to get rich, now they enroll at the College of Fine Arts.

There are a lot more we can point out, but most are negligible. Whether these things happening in the local art world are good or bad, so long as there is movement (a shift or change), it can only mean the arts are alive.



WORKS by Fitz Sy Ocampo

The bounty of her art

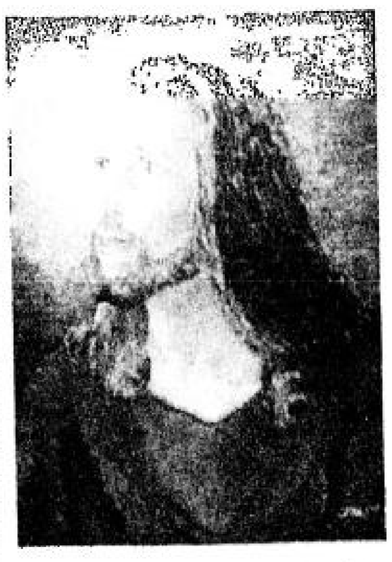
By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

FOR HER DEBUT SHOW, FITZ SY Ocampo presents over two dozen paintings in acrylic, a medium that lends itself well to her endearing explorations of nature's bounty.

A Management graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University, Ocampo began her love affair with art 15 years ago when she trained in various media under renowned realist painter Rody Herrera. This was reinforced by her extensive exposure to a wide variety of art materials and media that the family-owned art supplies store, Deovir, imports, markets and distributes.

In the last five years, Ocampo has lectured in various schools, teaching art and interior-design students the properties and applications of oil and acrylic. This year, she organized the "Art 4 Kids" lecture for children on the basics of acrylic painting.

Having resolved to pursue art full-time, she resigned from her work as assistant manager for cargo operations. Ocampo found inspiration from her numerous travels around the country, intent as she is on creating works that celebrate the beauty of the Philippines and praise God's greatness and boundless love.



Uncanny

The exhibit, "Fitz of Inspiration, A Celebration of Tropical Philippines," (Manila Peninsula Gallery) demonstrates the 26-year-old artist's uncanny handling of acrylic as medium. With her flamboyant brushwork and bravura color sense, not to mention her unsparing if generous paint application, Ocampo has created a suite of paintings that, by turns, excite and inspire, both sensual and spiritual in the depiction of the painting process and material.

The cacophony of colors her works projects are undeniably tropical: golden sunsets, lavender skies, misty nights, scenes evoked by an overpowering sense of wanderlust. The chosen sites are Boracay and its kaleidoscope of colors; Caylabne, both enigmatic and vibrant; El Nido, with its breathtaking view; Bohol, captured through the prism of its skies and waters. There are also new discoveries such as Coco Beach, Palawan trails and nondescript nooks and crannies even in popular destinations.

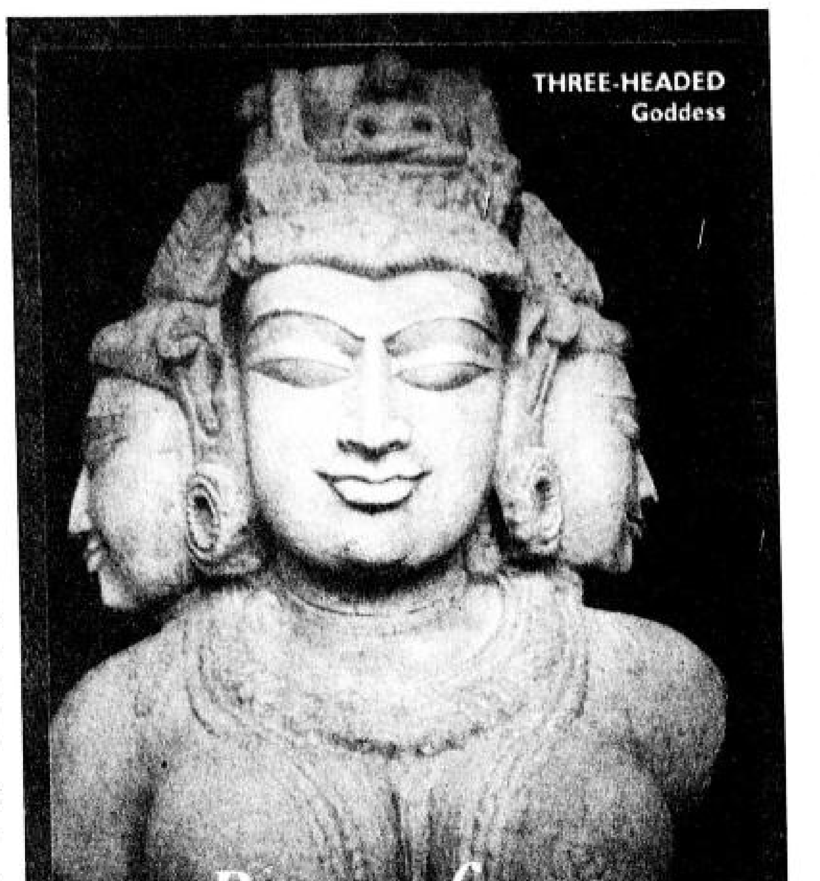
The challenge indubitably posed by these images goes beyond the tried-and-tested path of most painters who are merely obsessed with surface gloss. But in the hands of an astute technician like Ocampo, the work acquires a truly complex character, evoking the naturally cast as well as man-made shadows these sites conjure.

The convivial atmosphere evoked by these images comes from the lived-in familiarity that Ocampo wields, being a seasoned traveler both here and abroad.

There are pieces that are more wildly experimental in treatment, such as the multi-paneled painting, "Boracay's Kaleidoscope of Colors," a large (36" x 48") work that encapsulates the many-splendored beauty of Boracay. There are also works that incorporate a variety of found objects, such as slippers, drift wood, shells and stones and pebbles, all aptly emblematic of the artist's constant journeys throughout the archipelago.

In this debut show, Fitz Sy Ocampo has proven beyond doubt that the artist in her has finally emerged. Her perseverance, unstinting devotion to her muse, and her deep spirituality have made this young artist a worthy addition to the roster of names who are bound to make a name for themselves.

E-mail author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com



THREE-HEADED Goddess

Power, force and feminine energy

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

THE FIGURES ARE NOT large but the impression to the viewer is one of power emanating through the centuries, specifically woman power. There is a sense of massiveness.

The women are Hindu goddesses with ample breasts, tapering waists, a benign expression; and they are caparisoned in ornate pendants, beads, bracelets and headdresses.

The Hindu gods like Vishnu are also represented, but they are outnumbered by the women deities like Ganga, the River Goddess; Parvati, the Love Goddess; Lakshimi, the Restless Goddess of Fortune; and Saraswati, the Unblemished Ascetic Goddesses.

Spiritual yet erotic, the intoxicating sculptures made of sandstone were created by artists and artisans during the 9th-12th centuries. They once adorned Khajuharo temples in the Chatarpur district of Madhya, India.

The Khajuro temples used to number 85 but only 24 have survived. The rest were "devastated by men and nature," as one curator put it.

The works are on display at Raffles Fine Arts Gallery (8950409) at 58 Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Makati City. And they will be showcased there until all or most are bought. Raffles is an outlet of the Singapore-based Tomlinson Group, which earlier this year mounted an exhibit of antique Tibetan door paintings, also in Makati.

IN A YOGA trance

"The Hindu gods and goddesses should not be taken literally," pointed out overall gallery manager Menchie Comparativo in a recent media briefing. "They are cosmic forces."

The sculptures were executed in the round, in medium or high relief, on the outer and inner walls of the temples, and in pillars and ceilings.

We have dancers, graceful nymphs, attendants of the higher divinities, couples in passionate embrace, powerful goddesses, and vengeful gods.

"Ganga the river goddess is visualized as voluptuous and beautiful, as are all other major Indian goddesses," explained Ma. Patricia Puno, the gallery's managing director.

Among the most intriguing of the works is the Three-headed Goddess, which is the female counterpoint to the male Hindu triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

The figure wears ornaments on its heads, torso and limbs to celebrate the beauty of the human body.

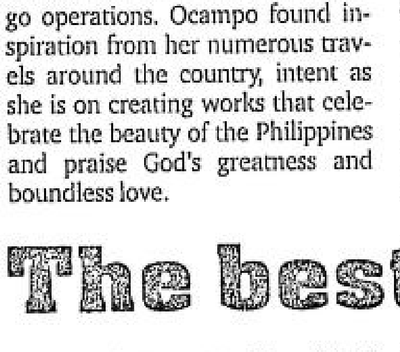
The work is called Shakti which, Puno said, represents "the potency of the women to procreate. Shakti means power, force and feminine energy."

"In light of the foregoing, it is quite ironic that women are often relegated to the background in India," Puno concluded. "By reviewing the role of these female deities through these sculptures, we can perhaps rediscover and recapture the very important symbolism of women in Indian civilization and society."

SURA-SUNDARI, Hindu goddess

The best and the worst of Philippine art in 2005

From page C1



JUVENAL Sanso

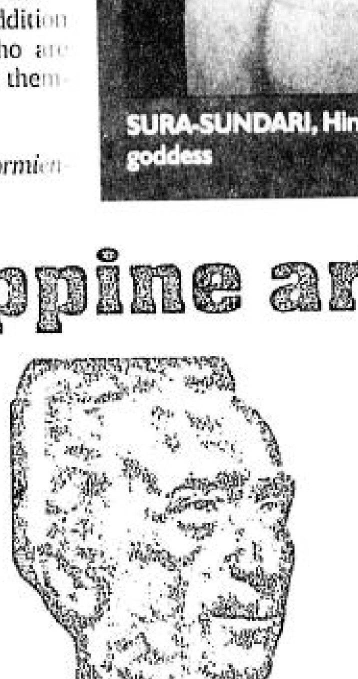
👍 **Sanso home for good.** Now in his 70s, the Paris-based Spanish artist who grew up and trained in the Philippines is set to make Manila his permanent base. He continues to be a tireless international artist whose works are collected in the chief galleries and museums in the West, but he says he has always regarded the Philippines as home.

In a related development, Filipino expatriate artists have started to be more visible locally, such as Manuel Ocampo, Gregory Raymond Halili and Jill Raymundo. There have also been reports that Manuel Rodriguez Sr., the print vanguard, is coming home.

ANG Kiukok

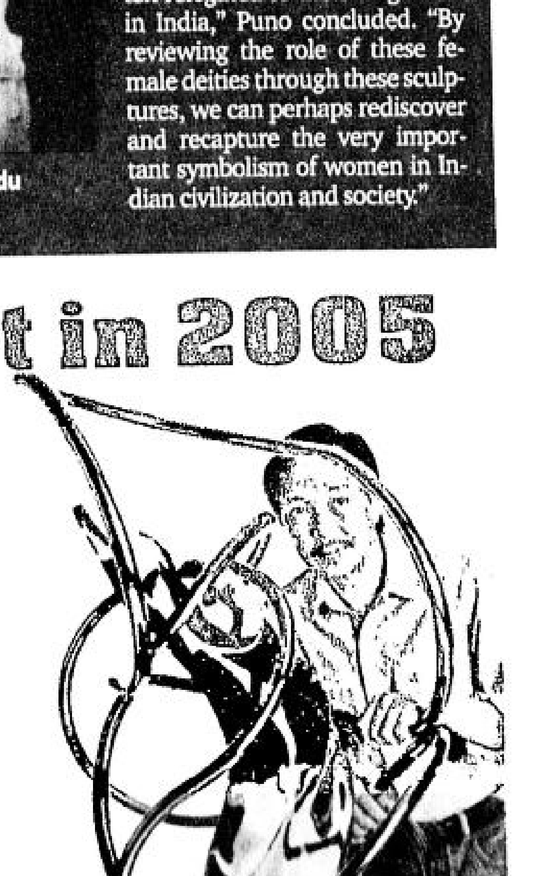
👍 **Fellowship of masters.** The art world grieved the death of National Artist Ang Kiukok last May, but the occasion reaffirmed friendships and banished petty rivalries. Ang's generation of artists—Malang, James Onglepho, Ong Bunglan, Romulo Olazo, Lito Antonio—toasted the man and his works as well as their fellowship in the name of art. The fellowship has been reaffirmed with the death last month of Rafael Asuncion.

👍 **Manila's hosting of the Asian International Art Exhibition.** The exhibit, ongoing at the Ayala Museum, gathers the preeminent contemporary artists across Asia, a rare opportunity for Filipino artists, enamored with Western models, to interact with their Asian counterparts. Hosting a show this big is an organizer's nightmare, and it is to the credit of the unflappable Ramon Orlina that the exhibit has been managed effectively.



FRANCESCO Monti

👍 **The Francesco Monti retrospective.** Through the efforts of art historian Victoria Herrera and the National Committee on Galleries of the NCCA, the expatriate Italian sculptor who did several seminal masterpieces at the Metropolitan Theater, Santo Domingo, UST, UP Visayas, and who trained Ting Ping Lay, Virginia Ty and other Filipino sculptors, was introduced to a new generation.



RAMON Orlina

👎 **Arts-management courses.** The proliferation of arts-management courses means there's a boom in the arts. But it also means the entry of mercenaries in the art scene, if not of mercenary management schools that seek merely to cash in on the arts and culture.

Lito B. Zulueta

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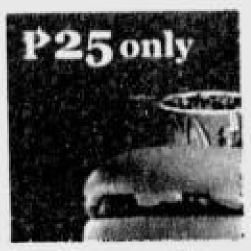

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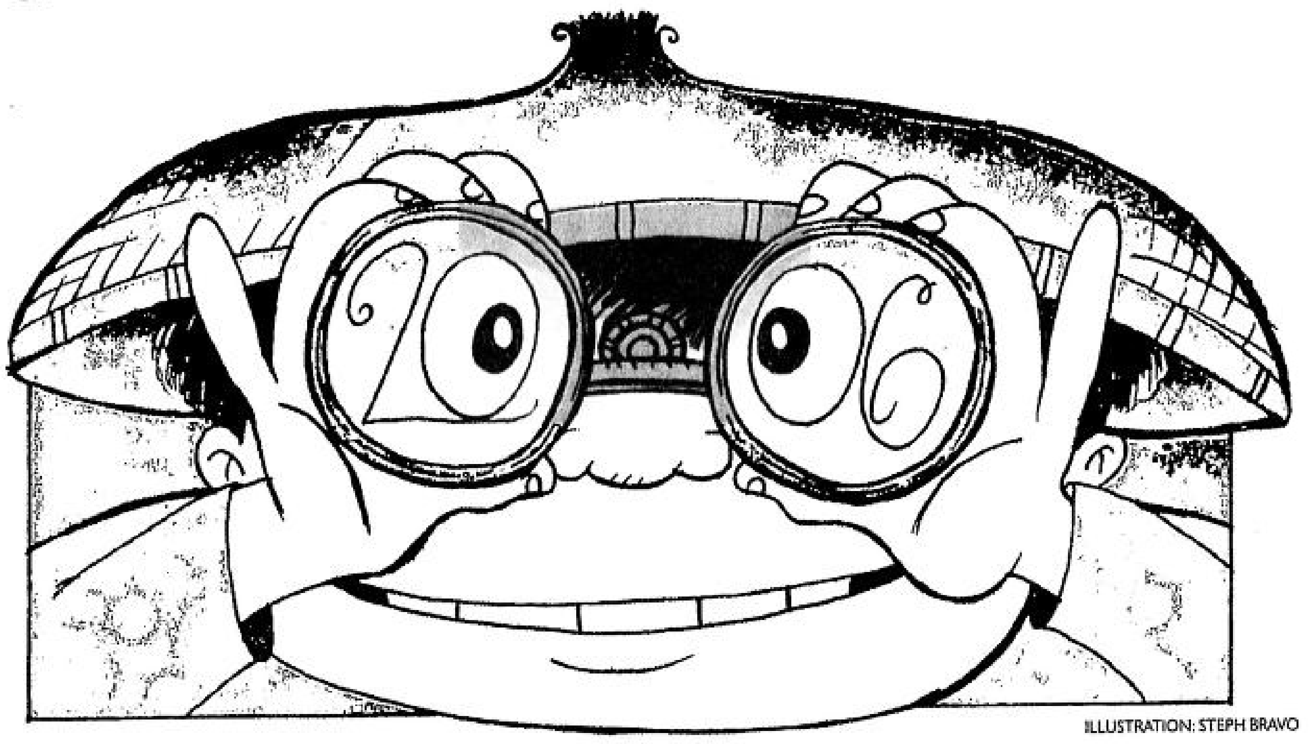
ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

IT GOES BACK MANY YEARS, OUR constant talk about nation-building. Even if we've been trying to do it for as long as I can remember, nobody has come out to say that we've achieved it.

We are getting there, though. Definitely there have been concrete gains in nation-building: E-Vat, a stronger peso, a succession of political crises weathered though not necessarily solved, many kilometers of new highway and bridges built, a new international airport in Manila waiting to become operational and, no matter what, a sprinkling of tourist arrivals.

We count the number of call centers that have mushroomed all over the country, as we do the increasing number of OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) and caregivers that we send abroad every day.

Impressive gains

The media report new and impressive gains daily, adding up the plus marks for our grand nation-building tally.

We keep a scorecard of the measurables, the physical hardware of nation-building. We do not tally the software. Now 2006 would be a good year to start doing that.

The software is really about our quality of life. Of course, quality of life improves alongside an improvement in, among other things, governance, economy and infrastructure.

Quality of life is about having comfortable, liveable cities with amenities that take the stress out of urban life; of having pristine and productive rural areas that support human life; of having traditions that continue through the years; of maintaining that Filipino-ness in ourselves and in our daily lives.

Hardware? It's a rat race. It develops so rapidly and is designed with obsolescence in mind. There will always be someone who will have a newer and better version, no matter how hard we try to have the latest technology. It is a one-way street.

Software? That is where we excel. For instance, without the culture of caring where each Filipino is bred in, there will be no success with call centers, OFWs or caregivers.

Without our innate sense of rhythm, how can our musicians and dancers have maintained their supremacy in the Asian circuit? In an obscure hotel bar in Kota Kinabalu, a fabulous Filipino band entertained me.

How can our furniture, houseware, fashion and jewelry be the design leaders in the export industry if the Filipino does not have that sense of style?

Unique

It is our software that gets us places. It is something absolutely unique to us, a cultural quality that sets us apart from other people in the world.

Our software gives us national identity, pride of nation. It makes us feel good about ourselves.

Feeling good about ourselves is a luxury. Many times, when Filipinos get together, conversation invariably moves toward a litany of national woes, of how the country has been on a downslide for decades. Finally, talk shifts to wondering what hope is left for the country.

We could look at our country and our lives more positively in 2006. Let it be the first year that more of us feel good about the Philippines, and there is much to feel good about.

When was the last time you felt good about the Philippines? The forgotten step in our nation-building effort is to feel good about the country, to take pride in our nation. Give it a try.

How can we rebuild a nation that we do not feel good about?

For those who have joined me in the past year's journey to discover Philippine heritage and to feel good about the Filipino nation, please accept my sincere gratitude and thanks.

E-mail the author at afvillalon @hotmail.com

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Promo Mechanics

1) The promo is open to post-paid and pre-paid subscribers of Globe,Touch Mobile, Smart, Talk N Text, Addict Mobile and Sun Cellular.

2) To get a chance to win, a participant must:
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   b) Keep the tape receipt and take note of the receipt's SERIAL NUMBER or TRANSACTION NUMBER (these are marked SERIAL NO. or "S/N" or TRANSACTION NO. and usually found at the top or bottom portion of the receipt).
   c) Text EQPROMO REG <TAPE RECEIPT NO >/<STORE WHERE EQ WAS PURCHASED>/<DATE OF PURCHASE>/<FULL NAME>/<ADDRESS> to 2955.

Example: EQPROMO REG 77-888/Landmark/Oct 6/
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3) One-time registration only. There should be one registered name per cellphone number.

4) For succeeding entries, participants simply need to text EQPROMO <TAPE RECEIPT NO >/<STORE WHERE EQ WAS PURCHASED>/<DATE OF PURCHASE> to 2955

Example: EQPROMO 777888/SM SUPERMARKET/OCT 27

5) For every successful & valid message sent, participants will earn one raffle entry to the monthly and grand draw. One tape receipt number is equivalent to one entry regardless of size and quantity of EQ product reflected in that receipt. Entries with incomplete information will not be considered as valid entries.

**IMPORTANT: Tape receipts must indicate the product EQ. For receipts that do not, consumer must request for an OFFICIAL RECEIPT or CASH INVOICE and have the EQ product purchased specified in the OFFICIAL RECEIPT or CASH INVOICE. He must use the OR or Cash Invoice No. as entry to the promo in the format indicated. DO NOT FORGET to keep both the tape receipt and the OFFICIAL RECEIPT or CASH INVOICE as these will be required when claiming the prize.*

6) Participants must keep all their tape receipts as proof of purchase. Failure to present the receipt which contains the winning Tape Receipt Number and transaction details will disqualify the winner from claiming the prize.

7) A successful registration, which includes the initial entry is free. For succeeding entries, cost for each successful message sent and received is P 2.50 for Globe, Touch Mobile, Smart, Talk N Text, Addict Mobile, Infinity, and P2.00 for Sun Cellular subscribers. The same rates apply to erroneous registrations.

Draw Dates	Deadline for Texting of Entries	Prizes/ Number of Winners
Nov 4, 2005 1st Monthly Draw 5:30pm	Nov 4, 2005 4:59pm	1 winner of P100,000 5 winners of P20,000 each 5 winners of P8,000 each
Dec 2, 2005 2nd Monthly Draw 5:30pm	Dec. 2, 2005 4:59pm	1 winner of P100,000 5 winners of P20,000 each 5 winners of P8,000 each
Jan 6, 2006 Grand Draw 5:30pm	Jan 6, 2006 4:59pm	1 winner of P500,000 2 winners of P50,000

8) The winners will be drawn electronically via randomizer. The draw will be held at the JS Unitrade Merchandise, Inc. office, 31/F Raffles Corporate Centre, Emerald Ave., Pasig City in the presence of JS Unitrade Merchandise Inc., DTI, and Direct Image Dimensions representatives.

9) Winners may win only once in each draw. In case a person's name is drawn more than once, he is entitled to the prize of greatest value. Non-winning entries are qualified for the succeeding draws.

10) Winners will receive a call on their mobile phones and will be notified via a registered notification letter.

11) Prizes are transferable.

12) Winners will shoulder the 20% tax on prizes exceeding P10,000. Incidental expenses related to winning and redemption, including but not limited to, travel expenses to claim prize, etc., will be for the account of the winners.

13) All employees of JS Unitrade Merchandise Inc., Direct Image Dimensions, Global Wireless Connections and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promo.

14) To receive weekly promo updates, text EQPROMO ON to 2955. For further inquiries text in EQPROMO ASK <your question> to 2955. Same text rates apply.

*Promo runs from Oct. 6, 2005 to Jan. 6, 2006
See posters and flyers for more details
Per DTI-NCR Permit # 2356 series of 2005*

Jara and Rubio at Blueroom

RYAN JARA and Ryan Rubio present a collaborative art exhibit at the Blueroom Art Gallery, 1354 Lacuna St. and Apolinario St., Bangkal, Makati City until Jan. 15. In "Underground Floor," Jara and Rubio focus on two serious and opposing subjects: vanity and faith. Call 7510746 or 0929-8153038.

ALFREDO Aquilizan presents his mixed media pieces and canvas works in black and white at The Drawing Room, G/F, Metrostar Bldg., 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati, until Jan. 11. Call 8976990/7877.

VISUAL ARTS

ARTISTS-TEACHERS and selected Art Informal students are holding an exhibit of large drawings until Jan. 15, , at Art Informal, 277 Connecticut St., East Greenhills, Mandaluyong. Participating Art Informal faculty members are Joel Alonday, Jose Santos III, Erwin Leano, Pamela Yan-Santos, Riel Hilario, Jim Orencio, Tatong Torres, Cathy Lasam, Jojo Ballo, Carlo Saavedra, Vincent Padilla and Gerry Ingco. Art Informal students include Angel Gonzalez, Bob Scott, Ana Varona, Roslind Ng, Bianca Nunag, Stephanie Lopez, Willie Espino and Edward Tan. Call 7258518.

BOSTON GALLERY presents "Alay 9," a comprehensive show of selected paintings, drawings and sculptures by more than 30 contemporary Filipino visual artists until Jan. 12. Participating artists include Leo Abaya, Joel Alonday, Jojo Ballo, Marina Cruz, Tina Fernandez, Dennis Fortozo, Emmanuel Garibay, Sandra Fabie-Gfeller, Riel Hilario, Cathy Lasam, Erwin Leano, Joana Ledesma, Lea Lim, Ferdie Montemayor, Jim Orencio, Vincent Padilla, Samuel Penaso, Jill Posadas, Ian Quirante, Elmer Roslin, Carlo Saavedra, Jaypee Samson, Jerson Samson, Jose Santos III, Victor Santos, Christian Tamondong, CJ Tanedo, Rodel Tapaya, Juanito Torres, Cris Villanueva Jr. and Pamela Yan. Boston Gallery is at 72 Boston St., Cubao, QC. Call 7229205.

DR. REMMON E. BARBAZA will lecture on "There Where Nothing Happens: The Poetry of Space," in Juan Arellano, on Jan. 21, at the Lopez Museum, G/F, Benpres Bldg., Exchange Rd. cor. Meralco Ave., Pasig City. The lecture coincides with the ongoing exhibit of architect-painter Arellano, "Drawing Space," which runs until April 2006. Call 6312417.

FESTYLE

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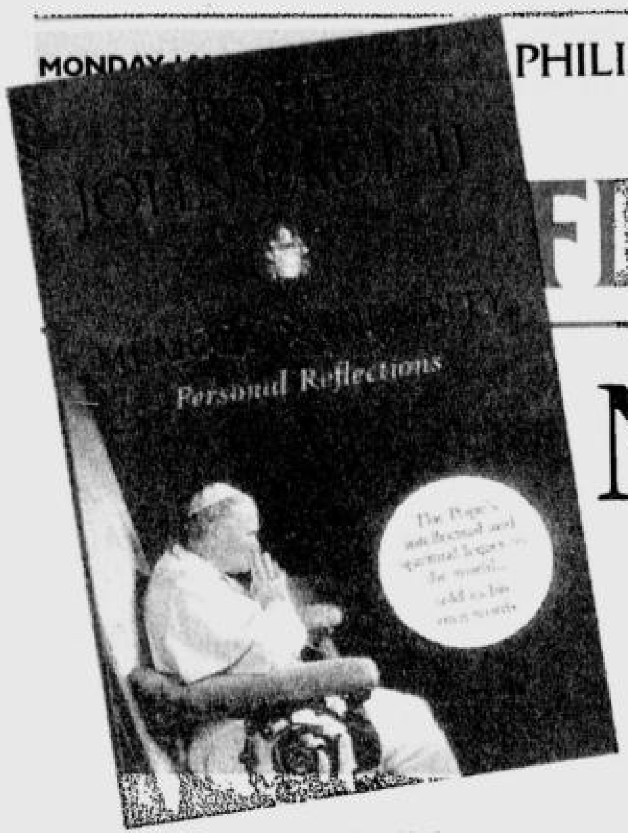
Inquirer life name/age/city/message to
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)



Notable books of 2005

By Lito Zulueta

"MEMORY AND Identity" (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London). Published shortly before Pope John Paul II died last April, the book represents the great church leader's last will and testament. Its remarkable analysis of the erosion of faith in Europe prefigures the papacy of Benedict XVI, who has committed to reviving Catholic civilization in the highly secu-

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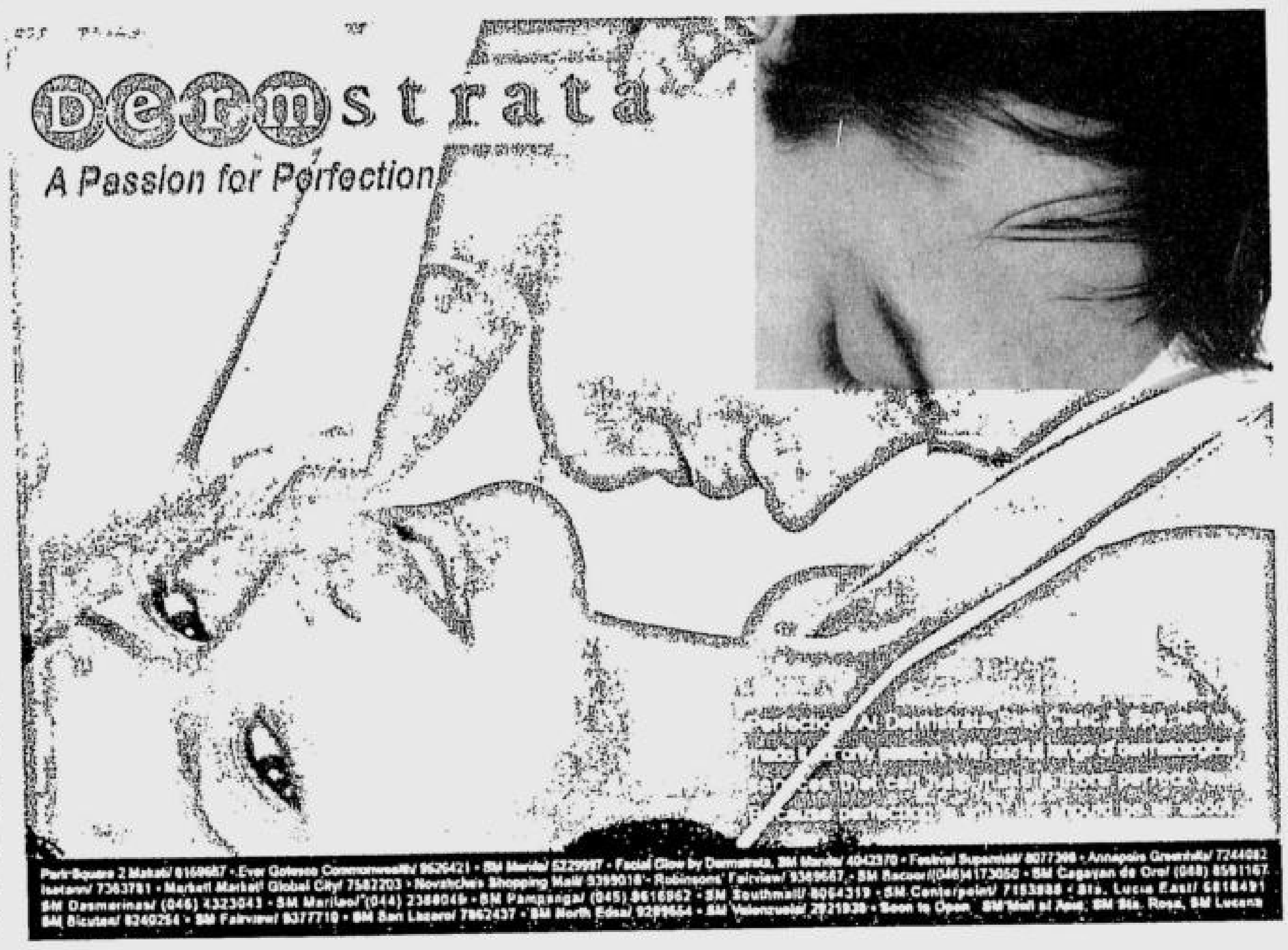
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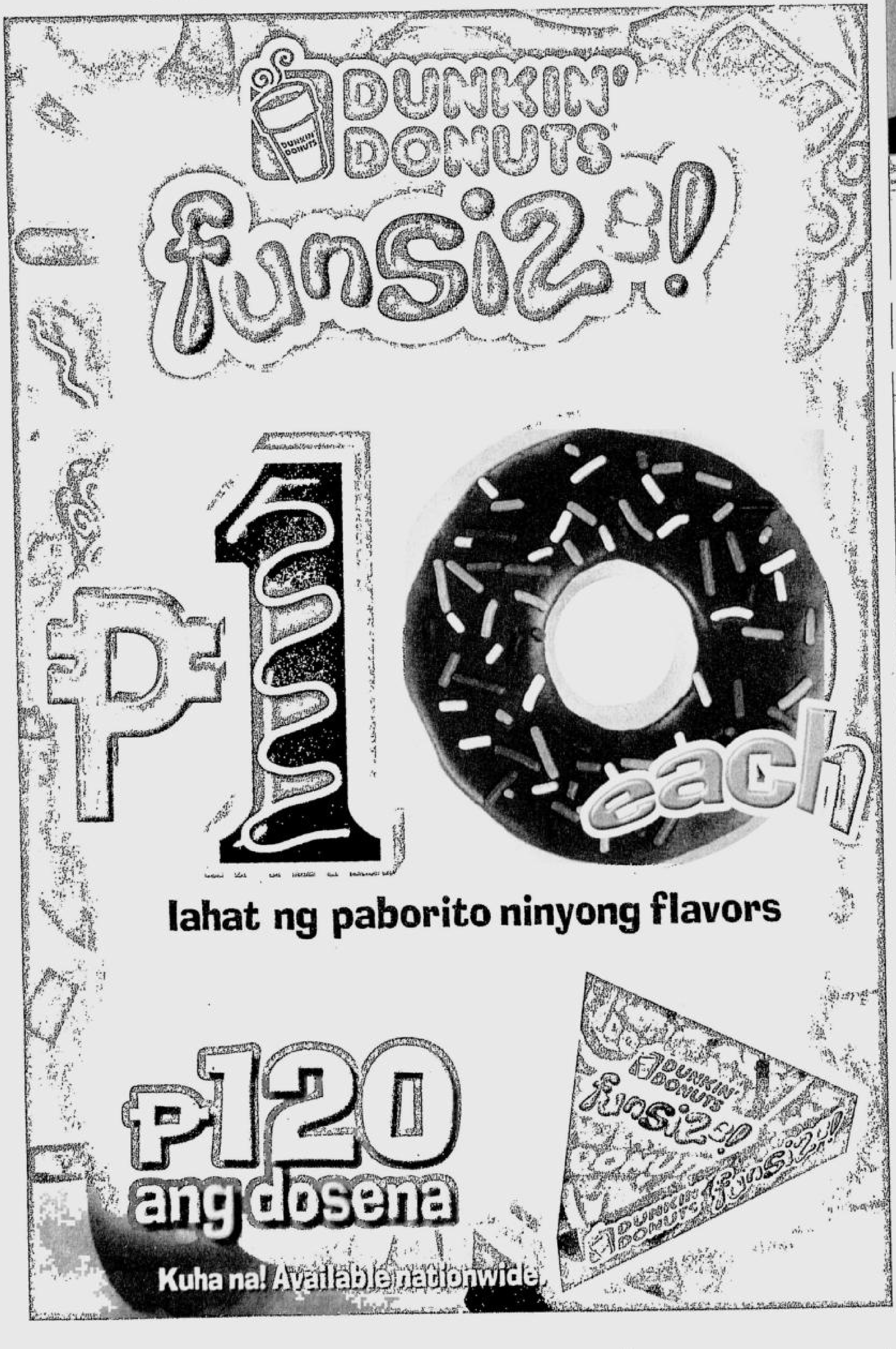
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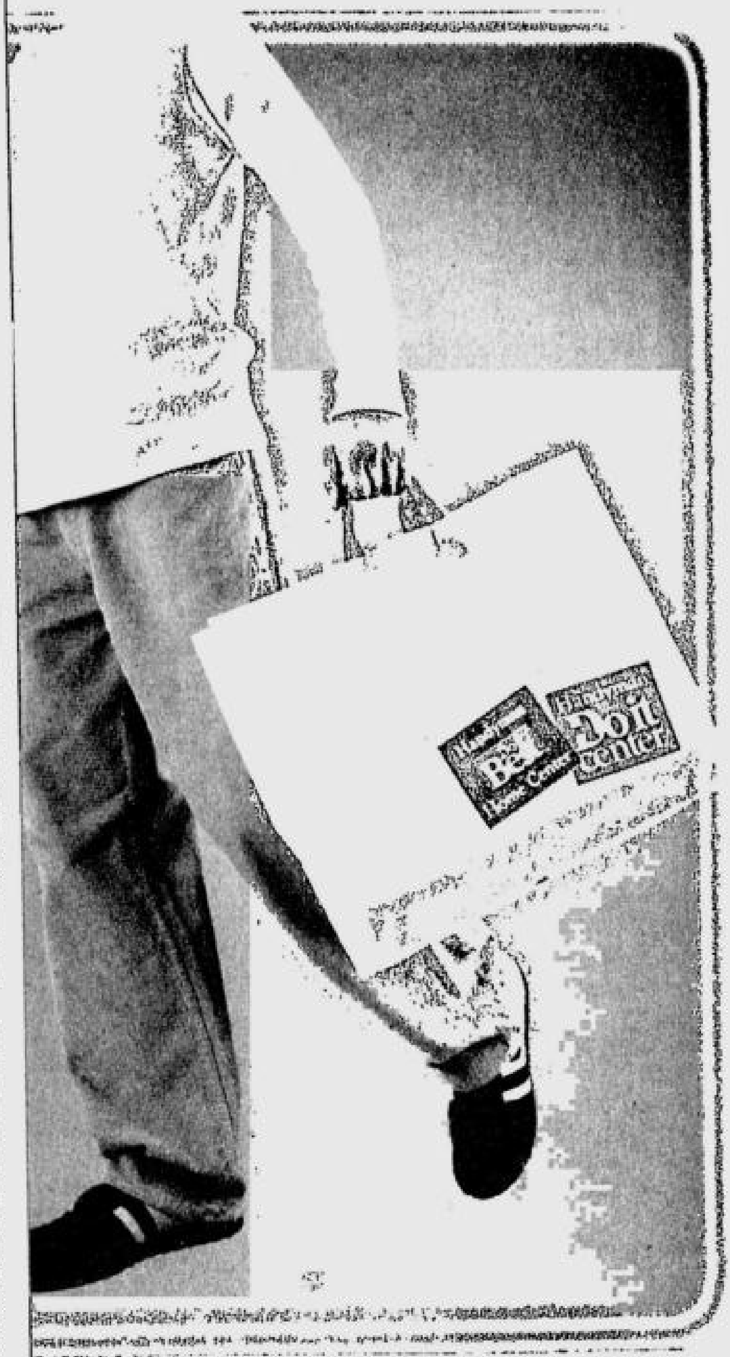

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See flyer for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 7303, Series of 2005.

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JAPANESE WOMEN DON'T GET OLD OR FAT
NAOMI MORIYAMA & WILLIAM DOYLE

January reads

"LOUIS VUITTON: THE BIRTH OF Modern Luxury" by Paul-Gerard Pasols is an in-depth portrait of one of the worlds' best-known luxury brands. It traces the remarkable history of the House of Louis Vuitton, which has been making practical but stylish luggage, handbags and accessories for more than 150 years.

Model Iman resists categorizing people according to ethnicity and delivers a new approach to makeup and skin care in "The Beauty of Color."

Renowned architects and designers present their most representative recent works in "The Ambience of Apartments by Page One."

In 250 glorious photographs, "Wide Angle: National Geographic Greatest Places" documents the beauty and depth of every part of the world. Each chapter is introduced by award-winning cultural writer and critic Ferdinand Protzman, whose essays accent the stunning photographs.

Leonard Maltin's "Disney Poster Book" features more than 100 colorful posters of Disney's classic stars—Mickey, Donald, Goofy and Pluto—as well as Disney's most recent feature animated films from "The Lion King" to "Lilo & Stitch."

"Designing your Natural Home" by David Pearson is a complete guide to creating an eco-home. With useful advice and beautiful color photos, the book takes readers through each step of the process.

Jonathan Ray's "All About Wine" will enable wine enthusiasts or neophytes to approach any bottle with confidence.

In "Japanese Women Don't Get Old or Fat," Naomi Moriyama and William Doyle write about Japanese old-fashioned cooking that has stood the test of time and waistlines for decades. It's the kind of food millions of Japanese women eat everyday to stay healthy, slim and youthful while pursuing an energetic, successful, on-the-go lifestyle.

Powerbooks Specialty Store is at Greenbelt 4 (7576428 to 29), Megamall (6352898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (8505662 to 63), Glorietta (7527075), Shangri-La (6380023/25) and Robinsons Place Ermita (5233334/524-3448).

A Practical Guide
David Pearson

How has a book changed your life?

ALL IT TAKES IS A WORD, A PHRASE OR EVEN a character to awaken us. Reading has the power to start off a ripple of change in our thoughts, feelings, viewpoints and lives.

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In connection with the Philippine Daily Inquirer's 20th anniversary, get a chance to win P3,000 PowerBooks gift certificates and be featured in the Inquirer's pages by writing about the power of reading.

1. In 150 words or less, write about how reading that book has inspired you to see life in a new way. Has it motivated you to start your own business? Challenged you to switch careers? Or changed you for the better?

2. Submit your entry together with a photo of you holding or reading the book at the Customer Service counter of any PowerBooks branch. Photos should be in 4R size, and printed on photo paper or submitted on a CD. Mail to or drop off at PowerBooks, 2/L Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City, or the Philippine Daily INQUIRER, PDI Bldg., Chino Roces Ave., Makati City. Call 6315939.

3. All entries must follow the format: Name, age, date of birth, telephone number, cell phone number, home address, e-mail address, title of book, write-up

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Advancing the art of shoemaking

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

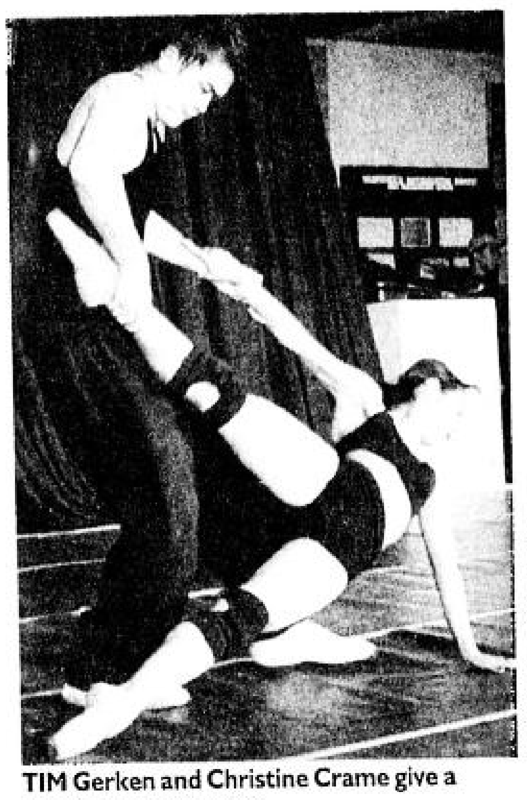
"MARIKIT NA SINING, MARIKIT NA Sapatos," a Christmas cultural program aimed at integrating culture with the economic, social and political aspects of its residents' life, was launched recently at the Marikina City Hall Quadrangle.

Culture and the arts are seen as strong components of total development of the shoe industry the city is known for. Under the leadership of Mayor Marides Fernando, the city government is determined to make Marikina the shoe-design capital of Asia.

Fernando, in her opening remarks, said, along with providing residents a source of livelihood, the city was also promoting arts and culture to elevate the people's cultural consciousness and harness their creative talents.

She said giving the people the right cultural environment was a way to strengthen their cultural fabric. To achieve these objectives, the program was conceptualized in cooperation with the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Marikina has two theaters to be proud of: Teatro Marikina, an amphitheater by the riverbank, and Kapitan Moy, the 200-year-old residence of Don Laureano "Kapitan Moy" Guevarra, regarded as the father of the city's shoe industry.


TIM Gerken and Christine Crame give a riveting performance.

METRO Manila Development Authority Chairman Bayani Fernando and Marikina City Mayor Marides Fernando watch the show

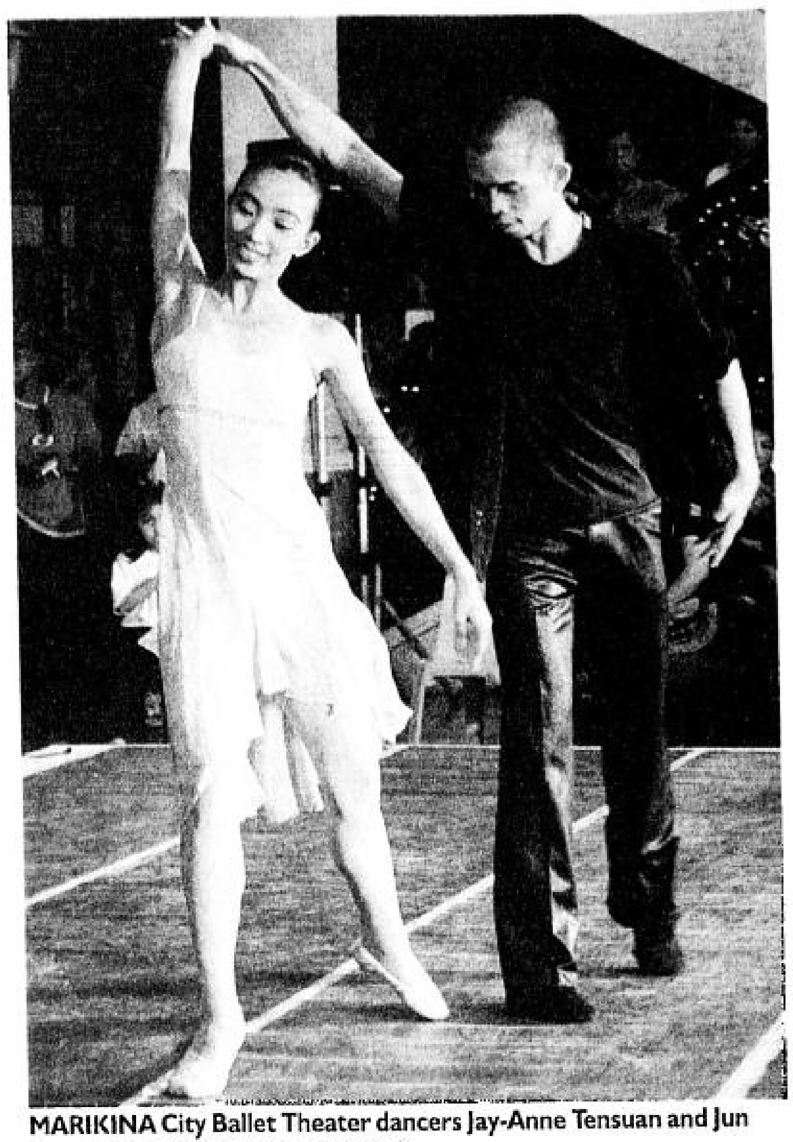
In his brief remarks, CCP artistic director Fernando Josef, a resident of Marikina, paid tribute to the city's shoemakers who inspired the revival of its arts and culture. He said the program would rekindle the love for local music and dances created by Filipino artists.

The program was a complete departure from the usual, said Fernando, that usually consisted of musical numbers followed by a *salu-salo*. According to Irene Rada, who emceed the presentation, the program, consisting of music and dance numbers, was enriching. The Makiling Ensemble composed of Diwa de Leon, Otto Hernandez, David Sicam, Evan Britanico and Wed Lodriga played numbers that underscored the group's ability to fuse diverse styles from the Philippines and other countries.

The program featured, among others, "Balse T'boli" which combined waltz with the pentatonic scale of the T'boli; "Sinalimbay" that incorporated the rhythm of Singkil and the sound of the violin, and danced by Tim Gerken, a Filipino-German practitioner of Chinese martial arts; "Bakit Hindi," a modern piece which fused rock, reggae and Spanish music, danced by Christine Crame, a former dancer of Ballet Philippines, with Gerken; the "Hegalong," which introduced the music of the indigenous two-stringed lute, danced by Biag Gaongen, a graduate of the Philippine High School for the Arts; and "Spanish Dancer" which mimicked the things a dancer did.

Violinist Merjohn Lingad Lagaya and pianist Glenn Lemen collaborated in Ernani Cuenco's "Kalesa" and George Canseco's "Ikaw."

The Marikina City Ballet, founded by Victor Ursabia, presented "Shoemaker," inspired by the city's shoemakers and extolling the virtues of hard work and diligence.


MARIKINA City Ballet Theater dancers Jay-Anne Tensuan and Jun Saagundo perform "Shoemakers."

Enrico Labayen's choreography of "Shoes in Silence," danced by Bobi Superales, explored movements using the *bakya*. Labayen said the residents', especially the shoemakers', exposure to arts and culture would sharpen their creative sensibility which would eventually be reflected in their work.

Ursabia, on the other hand, said efforts had been made to expose residents to the art of the dance, with basketball courts of some barangay being used as venues for these events.

Marikina recently made a bid to host the 2007 Asian Arts Festival. The city is a member of the Asian Network of Major Cities.

The program was capped by "Sinulog," a Visayan festival.

The city's shoemakers inspired the current revival of Marikina's arts and culture

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Gantimpala pays tribute to F. Sionil José and Nick Joaquin

GANTIMPALA THEATER Foundation (GTF), in cooperation with the National Parks Development Committee (NPDC), presents a twin-bill of English plays, "The God Stealer" and "The Queen's Jewel," based on short stories written by National Artists for Literature F. Sionil José and Nick Joaquin.

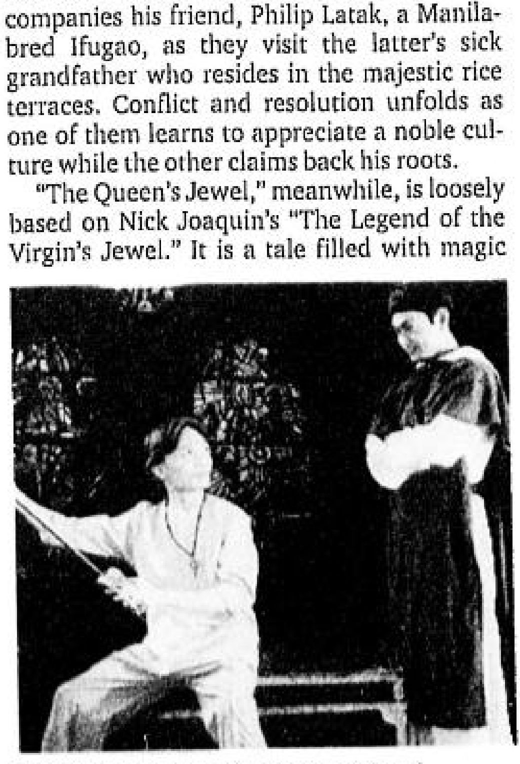
"'The God Stealer' and 'The Queen's Jewel' are the latest of a series of adaptations I have written for GTF based on the works of our National Artists for Literature," says playwright José Victor Torres.

ROEDER Camañag (Sam Christie), Lailanie Ann Tejuco (Ifugao Waitress), Joel Molina (Philip Latak) and Billy Parjan (Sadek)

"It has always been tricky to adapt literary works especially by great men and women who have enriched Philippine literature. One must learn not only the story of the writer's work but his voice as well. For a story, no matter how it was written, is part of the writer's soul. Very few also read the stories of Filipino writers today except as assignments in literature classes. I am glad that GTF's National Artist Production Series has made our young audiences curious again about our Artists' works and made them read it again, not out of the need of fulfilling an assignment but for pure leisure."

"The God Stealer" is based on a short story written by F. Sionil José. It is a drama about Sam Christie, an American traveler who accompanies his friend, Philip Latak, a Manila-bred Ifugao, as they visit the latter's sick grandfather who resides in the majestic rice terraces. Conflict and resolution unfolds as one of them learns to appreciate a noble culture while the other claims back his roots.

"The Queen's Jewel," meanwhile, is loosely based on Nick Joaquin's "The Legend of the Virgin's Jewel." It is a tale filled with magic and mystery as Padre Fernando discovers the presence of a gigantic serpent that keeps a mystical jewel. It also highlights the power of true love and friendship and the miracles of the Virgen de La Naval.


MICHAEL King Urieta (Antonio) and Camañag (Padre Fernando)

GTF artistic director Tony Espejo says, "Making these short stories into plays is our way of paying tribute to the literary legacies of our National Artists."

"The God Stealer" cast include Roeder Camañag (Sam Christie), Wowie de Guzman/Joel Molina (alternately portraying Philip Latak), Billy Parjan (Sadek), Dante Balois/Ces Aldaba (alternately portraying Apo Lawingan), Perry Dizon (Apo Lakay/Mumbaki), Penny Mervic Gallido (Bangan) and Ace Urieta (Bugan).

For "The Queen's Jewel," the performers are Roeder Camañag (Padre Fernando), Ces Aldaba (Padre Perez), Michael King Urieta (Antonio), Joel Molina (Lakan), Lani Tapia (Babaylan), and Kimberly Diaz/Val Roxas (alternately portraying Mira-Nila).

Providing Espejo and Torres artistic and production support are Joey Nombres (lights designer), Sonny Aniceto (set designer), Christopher Cervantes (choreographer), Jorge Cabullo (costume designer/production manager), Adrian Agcaoili (assistant director/speech coach) and Ruby Solmerano (stage manager).

Performances are Jan. 14 (10 a.m./2 p.m., SM South Mall, Las Piñas City); Jan. 15-17 (outreach show in La Union); Jan. 20-22 (10 a.m./2 p.m., AFP Theater, Quezon City); Jan. 23-26 (outreach show in Urdaneta City); Jan. 28-29 (10 a.m./2 p.m., JCS Auditorium, Paco, Manila); Jan. 30-Feb. 7 (outreach show in Isabela and Tuguegarao); and Feb. 10-12 (10 a.m./2 p.m., AFP Theater, Quezon City).

For tickets, sponsorship and queries for outreach tours, call 8995745 or 8963503.

World-renowned Japanese drummers in Manila

IN CELEBRATION OF THE friendship between the Philippines and Japan, the Japan Foundation-Manila and Philippine Airlines present the first-ever Philippine tour of the world-renowned Yamato: The Drummers of Japan.

The series of performances begins at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) on Jan. 11. Other concerts are as follows: PETA Theater Center, Jan. 12; Riverbanks Center Amphitheater, Marikina City, Jan. 13; and Ayala Center, Cebu City, Jan. 14.

According to artistic director Masa Ogawa, who founded the group in 1993, the name Yamato has special significance, as it is the former name of Nara, the city where the group is based, and for Japan itself. Nara Prefecture, which is the ancient capital of Japan, is believed to be the birthplace of its culture. Hence the name Yamato evokes images of a peaceful and artistically important period in Japanese history.

The word *wadaiko* (or *taiko*) means "drum" and refers to the instruments, which can vary in size from six inches to six feet across, used in ceremonies and special occasions. Other traditional Japanese instruments like cymbals, gongs, flutes, zithers (koto) and lutes (shamisen) complement and augment the percussive sound of the drums.

Ogawa says a Yamato concert, which has been described as a blend of theater and musical arts, "is not simply a drum performance."

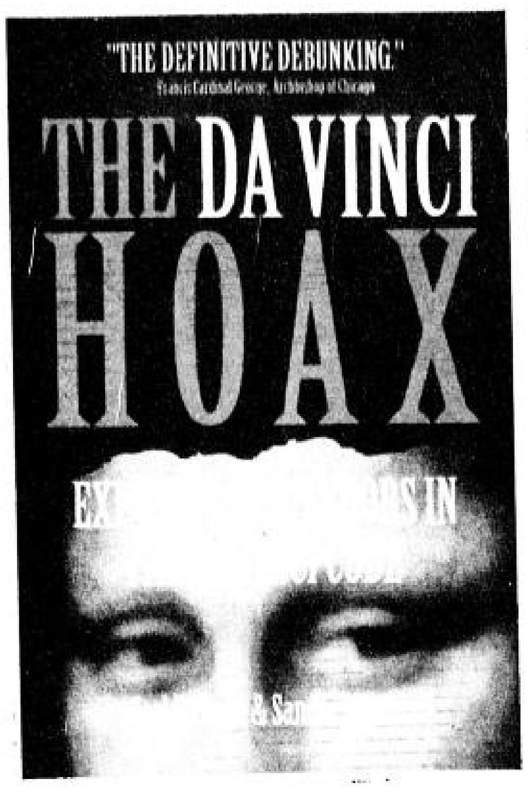
"We put our very souls into these unusual instruments, whose sound stir the hearts of people everywhere, and our performances are infused with the idea that the drumbeat, like the heartbeat, is the very pulse of life," he explains.

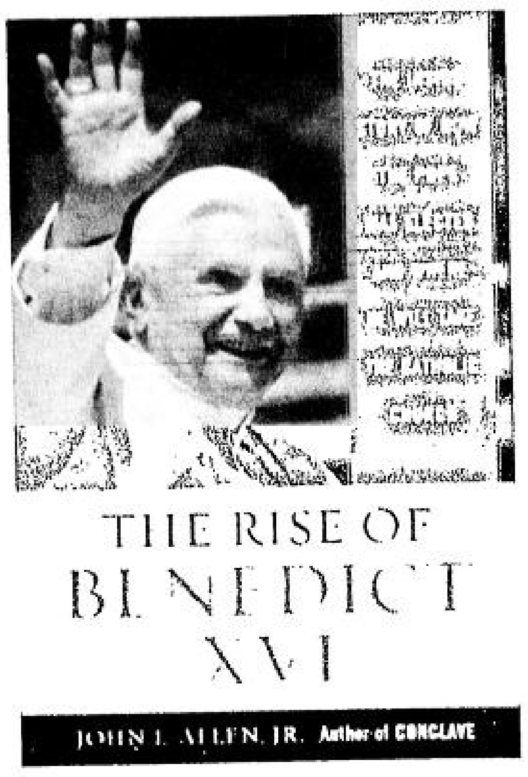
Since its formation, the Wadaiko Yamato drummers have played to more than a million people in over 20 different countries in Europe, North and South America, and all over Asia, as well as numerous audiences in its native Japan. They recently concluded their highly successful World Tour 2005, dubbed "Kami-nari" (Thunder).

The Wadaiko Yamato Philippine tour, which serves as the official opening event of the 2006 Philippines-Japan Friendship Year, also marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Japan.

Call The Japan Foundation at 8116155 to 58.

YAMATO: The Drummers of Japan





The Sea
JOHN BANVILLE

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Notable books of 2005

From page D1

lar continent.

"The Legacy of Pope John Paul II: Images and Memories" (Ignatius Press). Pope Benedict XVI, the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, gives a fond tribute to his predecessor.

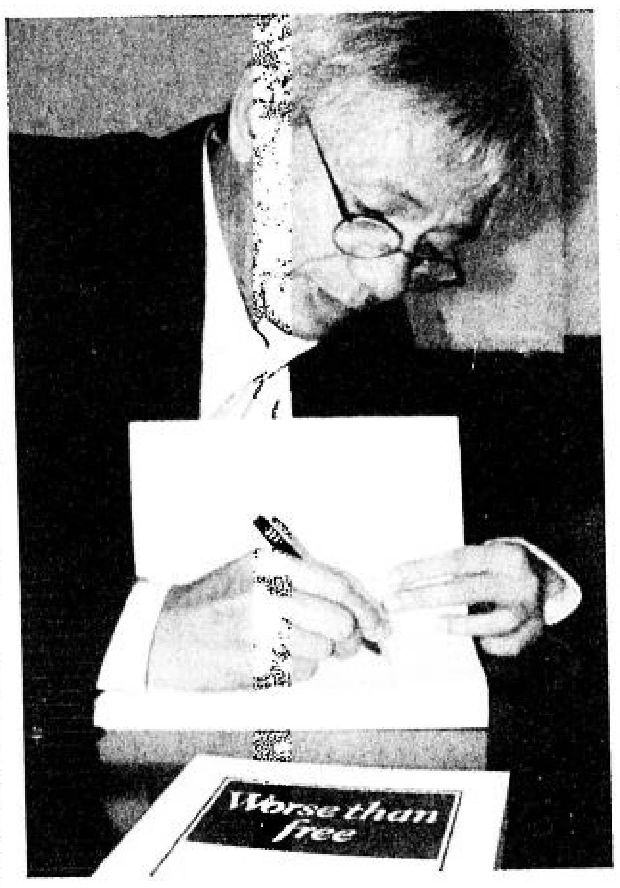
Other notable books about the papal transition are John Allen's "The Rise of Benedict XVI" (Doubleday), Fr. Andrew Greeley's "The Making of the Pope 2005" (Little, Brown); Peggy Noonan's well-written "John Paul the Great" (Viking); and Dominican Fr. Aidan Nichols' "The Theology of Joseph Ratzinger" (T&T Clark), which has been reissued with a new introduction and authoritatively provides readers an entry into the mind of one of the most intellectually rigorous popes ever.

"The Da Vinci Hoax" (Philippine reprint by Jesuit Communications). The novel by Dan Brown, whether or not it has literary and historical merits, should be on this notable list as it continues to be a bestseller worldwide. Its controversial claims, however, have been put more and more in doubt by authoritative books like this, written by Catholic journalist Carl Olson and medieval history expert Sandra Miesel. Considering that Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks have adapted the novel into a much-anticipated movie, the debate on "Da Vinci Code" is bound to rage on this year.

"The Sea" (Picador). Irish writer John Banville's moody Man Booker-winning novel about an art historian forced to come to grips with the wages of his personal relations since childhood, is gripping and beautifully written.

"Never Let Me Go" (Faber and Faber). Kazuo Ishiguro's Man Booker runner-up was probably the year's most surprising novel. The chronicler of historical displacement, the Japanese-British Ishiguro, author of "Remains of the Day" (about a butler in pre-Second World War England) and "When We Were Orphans" (about a detective in Shanghai during the war), now trains his pen at the future. What he has produced is a "Brave New World" in British politese.

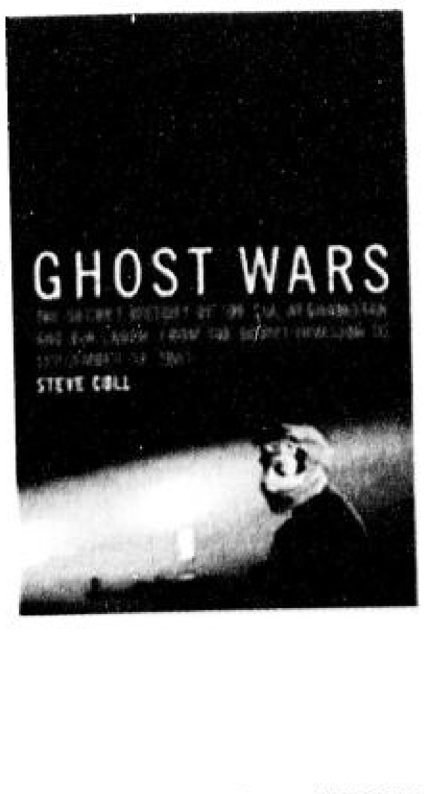
"A Long Long Way" (Faber and Faber). Also a Booker runner-up, Irish playwright Sebastian Barry's novel is war fiction at its finest, an interesting account of the Irish resistance while Irish soldiers join the Allied cause, including England's, against the Germans during the Great War.



PRESS critic Vergel Santos

Key fiction works are by John Banville, Sebastian Barry and Kazuo Ishiguro. Kerima Polotan returns

A LONG LONG WAY



"Ghost Wars" (Penguin). The Pulitzer-winning work by Steve Coll shows American miscalculations and even depredations in the so-called war on terrorism.

Other notable non-fiction: "The World is Flat" by Thomas Friedman (a report on globalization and the age of information); "Teacher Man" by Frank McCourt (about the author's teaching experience); "The City of Fallen Angels" by John Berendt (about a fire in Venice by the author of "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil"); and "The Lost Painting" by Jonathan Harr (about a missing Carravagio masterpiece).

Filipiniana

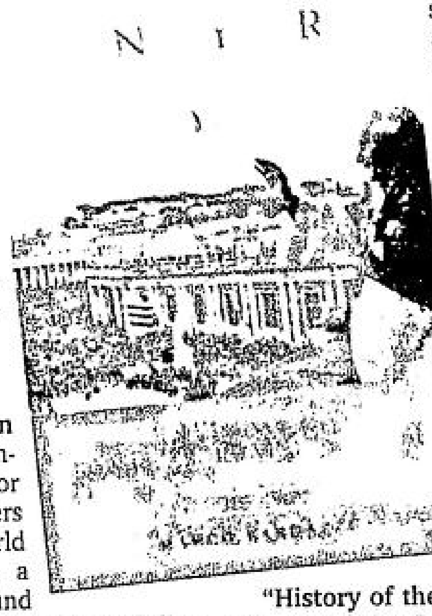
"Worse than Free" (Anvil Publishing). Veteran editor Vergel Santos gathers his BusinessWorld press critiques in a volume that is bound to fuel the debate on how the Philippine media may have jettisoned ethics in the race for scoop and profits.

"Slow Food" (Anvil Publishing). Edited by Erlinda Panlilio and Felice Sta. Maria, this anthology gathers essays by different authors on secret family recipes and other kitchen riches whose common denominator is that they are cooked with patient, loving care. An honest-to-goodness book on aphrodisiacs minus the leery implications.

"The Last Full Moon: Lessons on My Life" (UP Press and GCF Books). Gilda Cordero Fernando collects her personal essays in a volume that celebrates the life and times of a key figure in Philippine letters.

"The Chronicles of Interesting Times" (Anvil) and **"The Cardinal's Sins, the General's Cross, the Martyr's Testimony and other Affirmations"** (Ateneo Press). The collections of essays show that fiction master Gregorio Brillantes is equally masterful in the essay form.

"The True and the Plain" (UP Press). Kerima Polotan's collection of personal essays originally published in the defunct Focus magazine is perhaps the best-kept secret of 2005, released without much fanfare in keeping with the writer's severe and rather protracted post-1986 reclusive mood. The writings display the best of Polotan: acerbic, trenchant, but also poignant.



"Ubod" (National Commission for Culture and the Arts), The chapbook series, a project of the NCCA National Committee on Literary Arts, features first-time authors across the country and across several languages. The works by the 40 or so young authors point to the future of Philippine literature.

"History of the Bisayan People, Vol. III" (UST Publishing House). Without a doubt the biggest development in historical publishing in recent years is this publication series on Jesuit missionary Pedro Chirino's 17th-century manuscript, which gives historians and researchers a rare view of the Philippine islands and their people at the Spanish contact. Ironically, the translation and annotation are by historians from rival orders—the American Franciscan Cantius Kobak and the Spanish Dominican Lucio Gutierrez.

the last full moon

"My Fair Maladies" (Milflores). Edited by Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo, this anthology gathers personal essays by different Filipino writers, including Fil-Am Joel B. Tan, on their most intractable ailments and neuroses.

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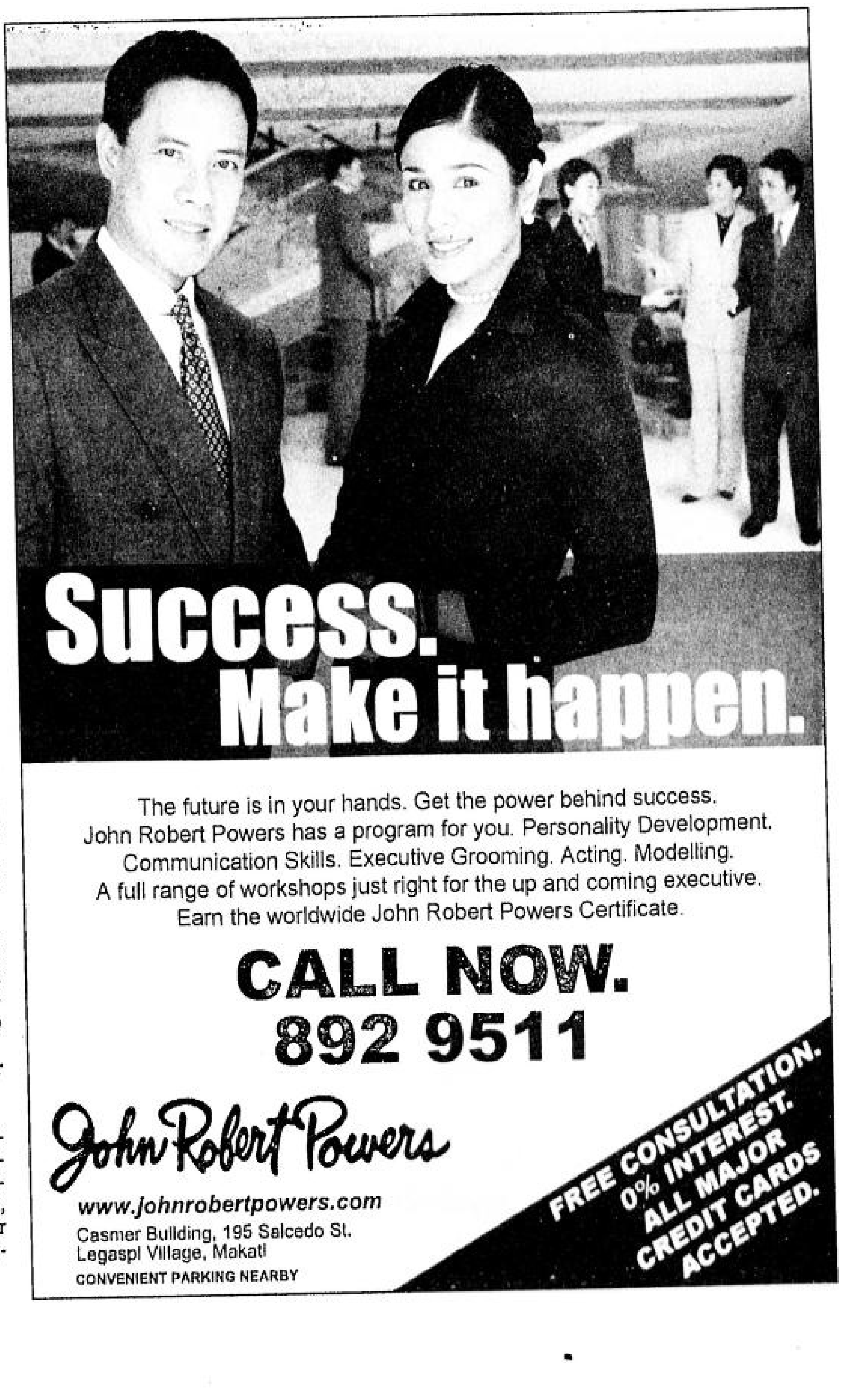
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SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

January 7 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (classroom A) BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS by: Heny Sison P1,500

January 7 (Saturday) 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) BROWNIES & BARS by: Heny Sison P1,500

January 7 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! DRINKS & VIANDS W/ TORANI by: Chef Jane Paredes, Food Consultant, trained at the Culinary Institute of America Hyde Park, New York and Peter Kump's New York Cooking School *Garden Green Salad w/ Strawberry, Raspberry & Mango Vinaigrette, Tea Smoked Chicken, Spices & Tea, Smoked Pork Belly, Coffee Rubbed Rib-eye steak Cold Beverage: Summer Cyclist, Strawberry Slim, Ice Café Mocha Java, Tea & Fruit Freeze in 3 flavors. Hot Beverage: Vanilla Fun Cappuccino, Toasted Almond Café Mocha, Swedish Coffee Sugar Daddy Latte. P2,500

January 9-11 & 13,14 & 16-20 (Mon.-Wed. Fri.-Sat. & Mon. - Fri.) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) MASTER IN CAKE DECORATION / BASIC by: Heny Sison. Full participation. P16,000

January 9 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) SIOPAO & MAMI WORKSHOP by: Chef Katherine Sion, restaurateur (Ding Hao & Fat Kat restaurant), caterer and an expert in Chinese cuisine. P2,500

January 10 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE I by: Jacqueline Haessig Alleje, owner of Rizal Dairy Farm, Swiss-Pinoy restaurateur (Vieux Chalet Swiss restaurant), organic caterer and food consultant (Petra's naturally green, global, gourmet) * This class will guide you the principles of healthy nutrition & the nutritional guideline, menu plan & recipes of Phase 1 of the South Beach Diet Swiss Pinoy Style - the strictest phase of the diet. Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. P2,800

January 11 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! HOLIDAY AFTERMATH RECYCLING by: Chef Sam De Leoz Food Consultant, Stylist, Photographer, Caterer, Food demonstrator and Culinary Competition Events Consultant specializing in Basic & Classical Cookery; International & Asian Cuisine. Now you won't need to dispose of your Noche Buena Treats nor feed them to the dogs. Recycle and resurrect their preparation to simple, easy and appetizing fares. Recipes: Walnuts and Chestnut Salad, Smoked Salmon Pate w/ leftover Crab Alige, Chinese Ham in Creamy Tomato Nacho Soup, Turkey Fajitas w/ Guacamole and Salsa Dips, Crispy Turkey Adobo Flakes w/ Adobo Glaze and Cilantro Vinaigrette and Pinatisan Lechon. P2,000

January 12 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) BASIC FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS by: Glenn Remorca, floral designer Lecture, demonstration and hands-on production. Bring a pair of scissors. P2,500

January 12 (Thursday) 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (classroom B) SUSHI CLASS by: Chef Koichi Kondo, licensed cook from Ehime, Japan and food consultant to various Japanese restaurants. P1,700

January 12 (Thursday) 1:30 - 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) JAPANESE RICE TOPPING by: Chef Koichi Kondo. Recipes: Oyako-don (Chicken & Egg on Rice), Gyudon (Beef Bowl), Tendon (Tempura Bowl), Katsu-don (Pork Cutlet Bowl), Soboro-don (Minced Chicken & Egg Bowl), Tori Teriyaki. P1,700

January 13 (Friday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) DELI SANDWICHES & SALADS by: Chef Jane Paredes *This class will teach you how to prepare & package deli-style sandwiches & salads for take out counter & food to go. Recipes: Assorted Cold Cuts, Chicken Pastrami, Tuna-Apple, Grilled Eggplant & Cheese, Crabstick Salad, Homemade Potato Salad, Aioli Dip with Potato Chips, Fresh Fruit Compote and Garden Green Salad. P1,700

January 14 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) DOUGHNUT WORKSHOP by: Chef Jane Paredes. P2,500

January 16 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) FRESH PASTA WORKSHOP by: Chef Giorgio Bucciarelli, Master Pizzaiolo & Barista, food consultant of various Italian restaurants all over Metro Manila, graduated at Culinary Institute, Milan, Italy. Demonstration with student participation. P2,500

January 17 (Tuesday) 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) ARTISANAL BREAD by: Jacqueline Haessig Alleje * Nothing equals the satisfaction of home baked breads. In this class you will learn how to bake savory and sweet quick breads. This class is a must for all who wants to complete their skill of healthy cooking. This class will teach you how to prepare the most delicious healthy breads. And, if you want to turn it into a small business, we teach you how to. Recipes: Whole Wheat Sandwich Bread, Yogurt Graham, Herb-Onion-Bacon Bread, Yogurt Graham Bread, Bread Sticks, Focaccia, Raisin Bread and Mango Tea Bread. P2,500

January 18 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! MEDITERRANEAN SALADS, AND SOUPS FOR BACK TO YOUR WAIST WATCHERS PROGRAM by Chef Sam de Leoz. Get back to your waist watchers program with simple Mediterranean salads and soups for the holiday aftermath. *Greek Salad, Asparagus and Orange Salad, Bean, Mushroom and Chorizo Salad, Tabbouleh, Spanakopita (Spinach and cheese pie), Spiced Mussel Soup. P2,000

January 19 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! EVERYDAY FOOD I by: Chef Ed Quimson, is a seasoned master chef of Spanish origin, creator of Chef Ed's Restaurant at Salcedo Village, Makati City and his latest restaurant FILOS at The Fort, Makati City. He has also lent his expertise to such restaurants as La Tasca, Via Mare, The Nielsen Tower, the Member's Lounge of the Phil. Stock Exchange & the Subic Yacht Club * Sinigang na Lechon Kawali, Bangus Bellies Asado, Chicken a la King, London Broil Steak, Fruit Salad. P2,500

January 20 (Friday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) PAELLA Y MAS (Paellas & More!) by: Chef Ed Quimson * Recipes: Paella Negra (w/ squid ink), Paella ala Montaña, Paella Catalan (sin Tropezone), Paella Sevillana (Vegetarian), Paella Con Sala y Mejillones, Ensalada Especial & Pescado ala Salle. Demonstration with student participation. P2,500

January 21 (Saturday) 1:30 - 5:30 p.m. (classroom A) BASIC RESTAURANT SERVICE SKILLS by: Cecile Mauricio, former editor of Mabuhay Philippines (Philippine Airlines' in-flight magazine), is a communication and marketing consultant for various restaurants. P1,500

January 21 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! PHILIPPINE REGIONAL CUISINE PART 1 by: Chef Sam De Leoz. Taste and experience the flavors of our very own popular Filipino regional delicacies. Recipes: Ilocos Pinapaitan, Dinuguan, La Paz Batchoy, Bacolor Tamales, Albay's Pinangat, Bicol Express, Railway Sizzling Sisig. P2,000

January 23-25 & 27-28 (Mon.-Wed. & Fri.-Sat.) 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (classroom A) GUMPASTE FLOWER MAKING by: Heny Sison. Full participation. P5,000

January 23-25 & 27-28 (Mon.-Wed. & Fri.-Sat) 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) ADVANCED CAKE DECORATION by: Heny Sison. Prerequisite: MASTER IN CAKE DECORATION. Full participation. P10,000

January 23 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) PIZZA CLASS WORKSHOP by: Chef Giorgio Bucciarelli Demonstration with student participation. P2,500

January 24 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE COOKING by: Chef Koichi Kondo * Learn all-time favorites Japanese dishes applicable to home & professional cooking such as: Sushi, Sashimi, Sukiyaki, Miso Soup, Tempura, Teriyaki, Udon Noodles in Clay Pot, Chicken Teriyaki & Japanese Fried Rice. P2,500

January 25 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! VERY SPECIAL PASTAS by: Chef Ed Quimson. Recipes: Mushroom Canneloni, Penne w/ Smoked Longaniza Sauce, Smoked Chicken Lasagna, Spaghetti w/ Bacon, Asparagus & Mushroom Cream, Fettucine of Crepes w/ Mango and grated white chocolate. P2,500

January 26 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) FLOWER SHOP FAVORITES by: Glenn Remorca. Demo and hands-on production. Bring a pair of scissors. P3,000

January 26 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) INTRODUCTION TO SPANISH COOKING by: Chef Ed Quimson. Recipes: Croquettas, Tortilla de Patata, Salpicao, Arroz Abanda, Alioli, Callos Al Estilo, Pescado Al Penalti & Natillas (Spanish Custard). P2,500

January 27 (Friday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) RECIPES FOR SUCCESS IN THE FOOD CART BUSINESS I by Chef Vicky Villanueva, from Stars & Bizu,. Let Chef Vicky share with you her wealth of knowledge and experience of patissene and restaurant concepts, skills, techniques & operations * You can start now!!! How to make your own sausage, hamburger & hotdog buns, waffle dog, commercial and gourmet burgers, lumpia 3 ways, amoy, vegetables & ubod and the secret behind a tender juicy roast chicken. Bonus-start up tips packaging. Managing your cost, ingredients, food safety and finding the right location. P2,500

January 28 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! FOOD CART BUSINESS II by: Chef Vicky Villanueva Food Service and Baking Concepts for 2006 - Learn, Earn & Succeed *Cashing on Cookies & Bars - Double Chocolate Fudge Cookies, Rocky Road, Triple Chocolate Bars, and Cream Cheese Bars; Sugar Free Chocolate Cakes & Specialties - Chocolate Mousse, Chocolate Sans Rival, & Chocolate Ganache Cake; Reinvent the Classic Brazo de Mercedes - Green Tea, Mocha & Ube; Creamiest Leche Flan Stand - Classic & Mocha. Chef's tips for delicate and satiny custard with amber caramel sauce. P2,500

January 30 (Monday) 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) SECRETS NO MORE! : by Heny Sison. P3,000

January 30 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! NOODLE LUST by: Chef Ed Quimson. Recipes: Sotanghon Sukiyaki, Pancit Buko, Bam-I Guisado, Roast Duck Mami, Chow Mein, Fried Milk. P2,500

January 31 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE I by: Jacqueline Haessig Alleje. Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. P2,800

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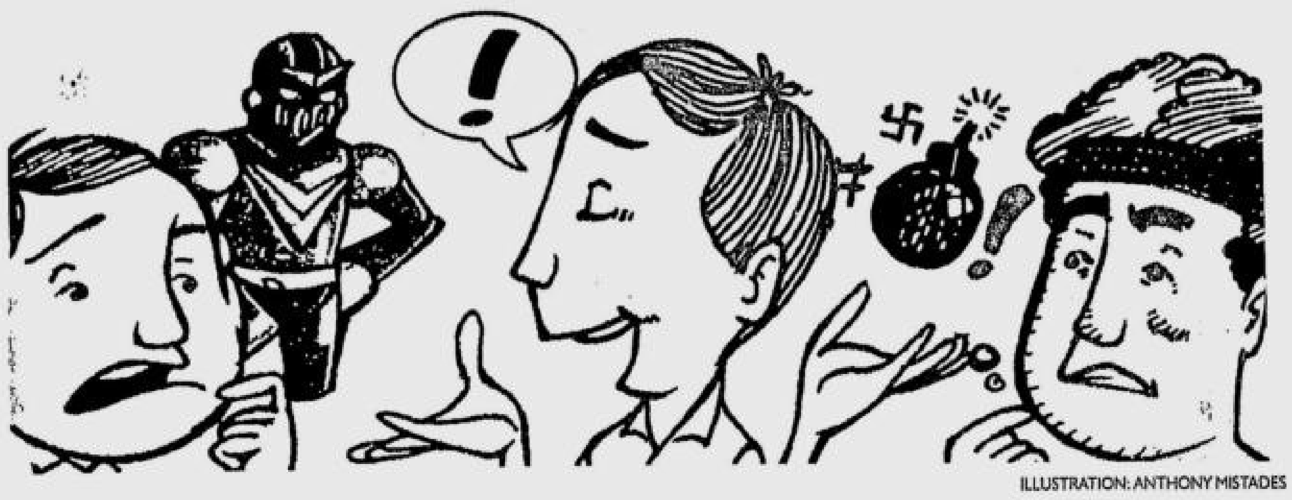

ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

Conference celebrates Philippines' rich languages

By Christian V. Esguerra

An international conference in Manila will tackle the Austronesian linguistic school, which accounts for 1,268 languages in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, including Filipino 'swardspeak'

AMERICAN language scholar J. Stephen Quakenbush

"*PURITA*" MEANS PENNILESS. Say "*pamin*" if he's gay but won't admit it. It's "*badingerzie*" if he's finally "out."

The language is "*swardspeak*." Some call it "gayspeak." And for all its informality, its seemingly shameless adulteration of existing vocabularies, it doesn't bother linguists.

"I don't think we should be disturbed by it," said American language scholar J. Stephen Quakenbush, academic affairs coordinator of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) Philippines.

Like any other language, it should be judged based on its effectiveness among its users, on how well they communicate and express what they need and want because of it, he said.

Yes, *swardspeak* is difficult to comprehend for a nonspeaker. But this characteristic is precisely what separates a language from a dialect.

"If there's no mutual intelligibility between speakers, they must be using different languages," explained Dr. Emma Castillo, executive secretary of the Linguistics Society of the Philippines.

"If they're just using dialects of the same language, they would still be able to understand each other."

Swardspeak is widely acknowledged as the jargon of Filipino gays and transvestites. It's characterized by words drawn and given a new meaning from just about any term that spring up from pop culture.

It's not clear if its uniqueness in the local gay culture already puts it among the 160-plus known languages in the Philippines.

What's certain is that the country is a very rich resource for anybody wanting to study language. It's ostensibly the reason why we've had *swardspeak* for more than four decades now.

Language-rich

The Philippines' value as a treasure trove for languages will be brought to a larger audience at the 10th International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics in Palawan on Jan. 17-20.

The convention gathers language scholars every four years to tackle issues on one of the largest language families in the world.

Speakers include Lawrence Reid of the University of Hawaii, Alexander Adelaar and Michael Ewing of the University of Melbourne, Ekaterina Baklanova of the Moscow State University, and Thomas Conners from Yale University.

There are a total of 160 paper presenters from at least 17 countries, some of whom will be talking about dictionary making and epics in Austronesia languages.

According to Ethnologue, the online publication of SIL International, Austronesian accounts for at least 1,268 languages spoken mainly in the islands of Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

About a tenth of these are scattered in native tongues all over the country, Quakenbush said.

The inherent richness of Philippine languages has been steadily attracting mostly foreign scholars. Too bad much of the activity has been out of the radar of local speakers, if not language experts.

"They're known for their complexity. They're highly developed and cause linguists headaches," Quakenbush said.

He's particularly fascinated with the flexibility of just about any Tagalog word. A simple change in affixation, he said, can change the meaning "by fine degrees."

Aral (lesson), for example, becomes *pag-aralan* or *aralin* (to study).

Indeed, the Philippines has so many languages that can be used as "a linguistic resource for people to express tiny shades of meaning," said Quakenbush who's been in the country for 20 years now.

Sadly, Quakenbush said around 30 of these languages are considered "endangered," largely because of the dwindling number of their speakers. Among these are Itnag and Aeta, he said.

Not swardspeak.

Taking a cue from the English language, a relentless borrower of words from other languages, the flamboyant jargon makes no qualms about picking a word and dressing it up with an entirely different meaning.

Judging by the experience of English, the borrowing in itself would ensure its survival, if not flourishing.

Good thing borrowed names don't demand royalties. For where else can "Julanis Morissette" mean "it's raining"?

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The chronicler of Narnia

C. S. LEWIS

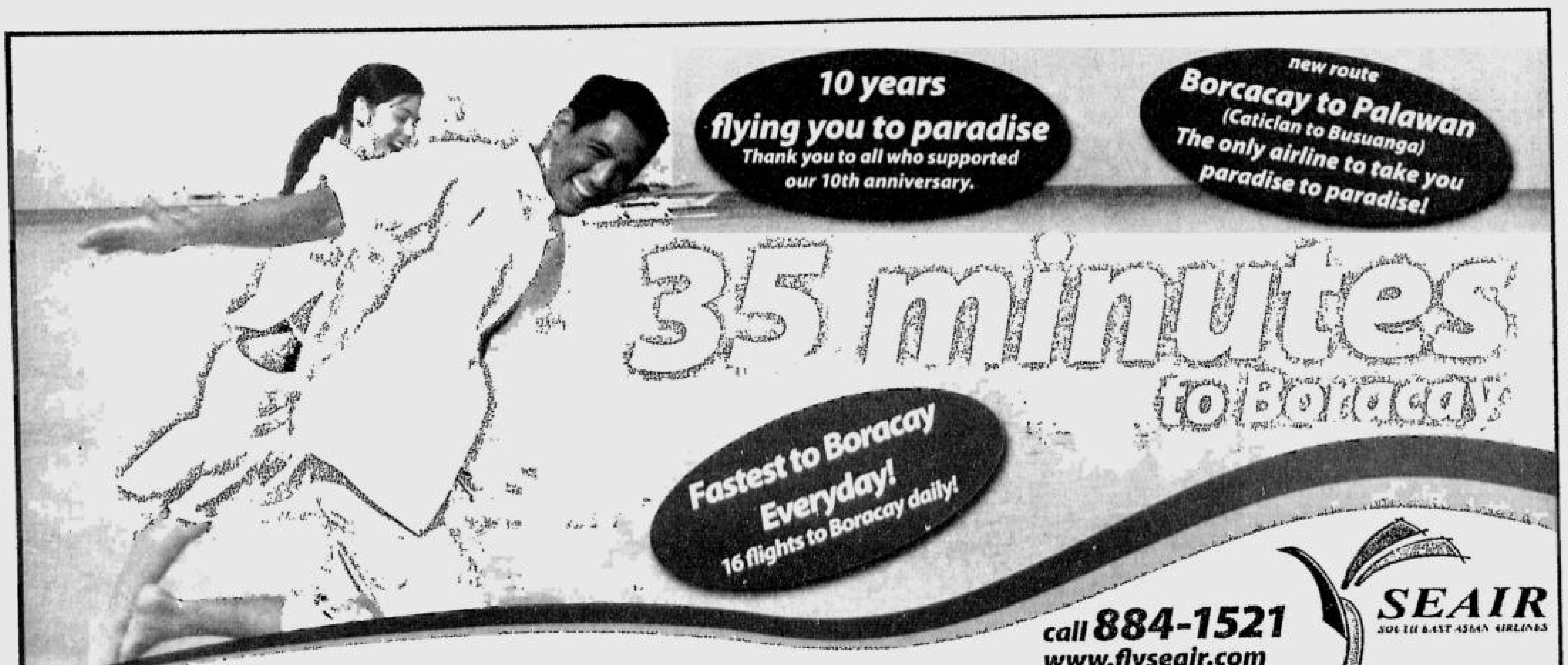
REVERED FOR HIS WORK on medieval literature and Christian apologetics, Clive Staples Lewis is best loved for his phantasmagorical series of children's stories collectively known as "The Chronicles of Narnia."

The young Lewis' favorites were "Treasure Island" by Robert Louis Stevenson and "The Secret Garden" by Frances Hodgson Burnett, classic tales that might have influenced his later works.

Following the publication of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" in 1950, Lewis quickly wrote six more Narnia books, publishing the final one, "The Last Battle," in 1956.

Although they were not well received at first by critics and reviewers, the books gained popularity through word of mouth. The "Narnia" books have since sold more than 100 million copies and are among the most beloved books of classic children's literature.

The books are available at PowerBooks.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Sharon Cuneta mega hit in pre-Christmas concert in Dubai

■ NEWS/A3
Charm offensive launched by female soldiers at Metro airports

■ NEWS/A5
Cecilia Muñoz-Palma, first Supreme Court woman justice, dies at 92

■ WORLD/A9
China's economy grew by 9.8% in '05 confounding forecasts

Widows of 3 brods who died on Christmas: Cop did it

By Luige A. del Puerto

THREE WIDOWS MARRIED TO THREE brothers who all died on Christmas Day pleaded for justice when they went to Camp Crame yesterday.

The women were wives of the Jimeno brothers, two of whom were shot dead al-

WIDOWS/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

For 14th year, Joker is Congress 'Kuripot King'

By Juliet L. Javellana

IN A BRANCH OF GOVMENT notorious for its free-wheeling big spenders, Sen. Joker Arroyo is holding his own as the Congress' undisputed

FOR 14TH/ A6

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Peso ascending on 2006's 1st trading day: 52.80 to dollar

By Doris C. Dumlao
and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

IT WAS AN AUSPICIOUS START FOR the peso, Asia's best performing currency last year.

On the first trading day of 2006, the peso broke into the 52:$1 level for the first time in almost three years.

The currency, which appreciated by 6 percent against the US dollar in 2005, closed at 52.835 yesterday, marking its strongest finish since the 52.76 on May 26, 2003.

It opened at an intra-day low of 53.02 and firmed up throughout the day to breach the 53 barrier and close near the day's high of 52.80. It gained 24.5 centavos from last week's finish of 53.08 to the US dollar.

Volume turnout at the Philippine Dealing System, the foreign exchange market, stood at $382.52 million, more than double Thursday's volume of $138.63 million.

"The peso is moving in line with market expectation. Sentiment continues to be positive for the peso," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

Tetangco said the peso's ascent was fueled by the good fiscal outlook for 2006 and continuing inflows of remittances from overseas Filipino workers. Corporate demand for the dollar was still thin at this time, he said.

Roland Avante, treasurer at Chinatrust Commercial Bank Philippines, said large OFW remittances were recorded during the long weekend.

PESO/ A13

Gov't asserts GIs' custody

Romulo spells out firm RP position on explosive legal issue

VIEW FROM THE TOP: President Arroyo with husband Mike Arroyo (partly hidden) takes in the sweeping vista of ricefields in Sagada, Mt. Province, at the end of her 6-day holiday. She also inaugurated the P17.3-M Nangonogan-Aguid farm-to-market road, part of the Halsema Highway. EDWIN BACASMAS

By Volt Contreras, Gil Cabacungan Jr.
and Tonette Orejas, *PDI Central Luzon Desk*

THE PHILIPPINES YESTERDAY ASSERTED ITS right to take "actual physical custody" of the four US Marines accused of raping a Filipino woman, and said any clash with the United States on the issue should be settled through diplomacy.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo spelled out the administration's position on the potentially explosive custody issue a day after Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez warned that demanding the handover of the suspects could strain Philippine-US ties.

Malacañang vowed to uphold the country's sovereignty in the case.

"Philippine sovereignty is firm as we anticipate the issuance of the warrants of arrest against the suspects which will mark the inception of the trial," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

"Philippine sovereignty and criminal justice shall be upheld in all stages," Bunye added.

At the same time, Bunye seemed to downplay the possible

GOV'T ASSERTS/ A6

Senior cop questioned in Piatco judge's killing

By Marlon Ramos,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau
and Armand N. Nocum

A SENIOR POLICE OFFICIAL WHO figured in a dispute with slain Judge Henrick Gingoyon three years ago has been summoned by investigators to answer questions on the ambush-slaying of the Pasay City judge last Saturday.

Senior Supt. Manuel Barcena, who formerly headed the Regional Drug Enforcement Office (RDEO) of the National Capital Region and is now with the Civil Security Group at Camp Crame, is the subject of an investigation, according to a Calabarzon police official.

The Calabarzon police official, who asked not to be identified, said Gingoyon accused Barcena of being behind the strafing of his house in Bacoor, Cavite, about three years ago.

SENIOR/ A4

GMA announces ₱35-B subsidy for food

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau
and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
in Manila

SAGADA, MT. PROVINCE—ON her first working day of the new year, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the release of P35 billion in government savings to subsidize selected food items and finance projects for the poor.

"I want to declare to you we will pursue the fight against poverty, hunger and unemployment," she told national and local government officials and residents at the St. Mary's High School quadrangle here.

At a press conference here, Ms Arroyo asked Environment Secretary Michael Defensor to tell reporters about her program to keep prices at P18 per kilogram for rice and P4.50 per pack for noodles.

"We have other things in store for you, like those on rice and noodles. Mike, you may want to tell them about our program for rice and noodles. It's P18 (per kilogram for rice) and P4.50 (for noodles)," said Ms Arroyo.

Asked if this meant the government would start subsidizing food, the President and Defensor said "yes."

"This is dedicated to our poorest communities," said Defensor.

In Manila, Trade Secretary Peter Favila denied any government plan to subsidize budget noodles and rice sold in all groceries and markets nationwide.

GMA ANNOUNCES/ A6

Not only for dogs, 2006 is also Year of the Turtle

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE UNITED NATIONS HAS declared 2006 the Year of the Turtle in an effort to save the gentle species.

Twenty-five countries in the Indian Ocean Southeast Asian (IOSEA) region, including the Philippines, have signed a memorandum of understanding dedicating 2006 to the protection of sea turtles, known locally as *pawikan*.

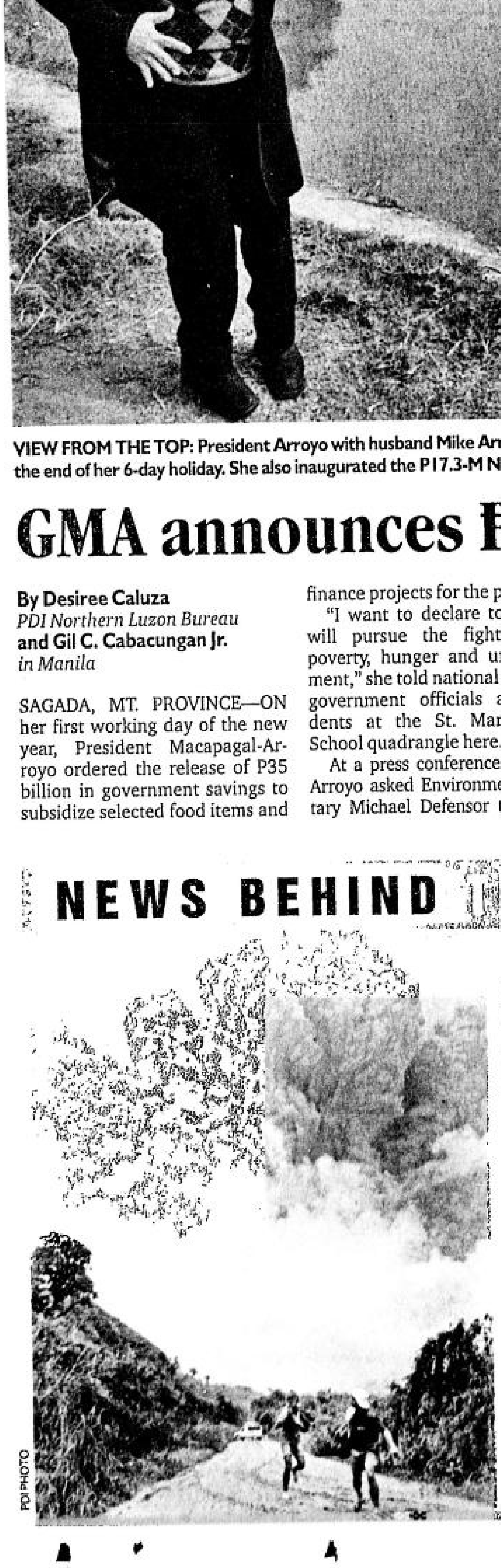
"The conference represents

NOT ONLY/ A13

JANICE BLUMENTHAL AND CLAUDIA TOWNSEND/CONTRIBUTORS

HATCHLINGS (top) face predators the moment they are born. (Above) Turtles spend most of their lives out at sea.

NEWS BEHIND THE BIG NEWS



PDI PHOTO

Covering the biggest bang of the 20th century

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

LAMBERTO "BERT" BASA WAS THE INQUIRER's correspondent in Pampanga province in 1991 when Mt. Pinatubo roused itself from a sleep of more than 600 years.

Being more of a photographer than a reporter, Basa was uncomfortable about being assigned to report on what would prove to be one of the worst volcanic eruptions of the 20th century.

The white-haired Basa, who is now 53, believes he was able to deliver because he was at the right place at the right time, and his editors had put their trust in him.

The first inkling that Basa had of the impending disaster came from the then vice mayor of Porac town, Exequiel Gamboa, who said a nun had reported to him that members of the Aeta tribe had seen steam coming out of the lower slopes of the Zambales side of the volcano.

COVERING/ A13

HERE COMES THE BIG ONE: 2 photographers run for their lives during the first salvo of Mt. Pinatubo on June 15, 1991. The photo was taken by INQUIRER's Boy Cabrido about 2 km from the volcano's crater in Botolan, Zambales.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2006

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will have mostly cloudy skies with rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/01/03/06

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Garci: Truth may be found in ERs

By Michael Lim Ubac

FORMER ELECTION COMMISSIONER VIRGILIO Garcillano says the only way out the leadership crisis afflicting the country is for President Macapagal-Arroyo to agree to an examination of contested election returns, a move also supported by one of the chief executive's staunchest allies in Congress.

"If we need to go down to the ERs, then so be it," Garcillano said in a recent telephone interview with the INQUIRER. "The truth is in the ERs. Let's put an end to this crisis."

He said Ms Arroyo and her officials should not resort to technicalities to block the opening of the election returns as it would only be through that process that the country could finally attain closure on the issue and be able to move on.

Garcillano observed that the lingering political crisis was eroding the country's democratic institutions and holding back economic development and progress.

Like Garcillano, Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. believes the truth lies in the election returns and called, in a recent interview, even for an unofficial recount of the votes cast in the 2004 presidential election.

The political opposition has accused Ms Arroyo of stealing the election from the late actor and opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr.

The Surigao del Sur congressman told the INQUIRER that since the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) was currently hearing the election protest lodged by opposition vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda against Vice President Noli de Castro, it should at the same time tally the votes cast for the presidency.

"One way to know the truth is to tally the votes of the president unofficially. Otherwise, we can never achieve closure if we will just rely on congressional hearings. If we likewise tally the votes for president, then nobody can argue with figures," said Pichay.

Pressed for specifics, the lawmaker said that Romulo Macalintal, De Castro's legal counsel in PET proceedings, was also Ms Arroyo's election lawyer and could very well look out for the President's interest in the recount.

Pichay said he had yet to consult Ms Arroyo about his proposal.

He acknowledged that the PET could not be expected to sanction the process officially as it had already dismissed Poe's electoral protest following his death in December 2004.

"But if they really want closure, let's do it. It's unofficial but we will find out the truth," he said.

"The opposition keeps on claiming that the PET decision in effect deprived the nation of the opportunity to settle the question about the legitimacy of Ms Arroyo's government. Since the votes cast for presidential candidates can be found on the same Certificates of Canvass, Statements of Votes and Election Returns, then by all means, let's also count the votes for president," said Pichay.

The result of the final tally should be presented to the public and respected by all, he added.

Pichay noted that the provinces identified by Legarda as the places where cheating allegedly occurred were the same ones cited in Congress by opposition lawmakers during the national canvassing of votes in June 2005.

No-el dubbed 'prescription to perdition'

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE PROPOSED CANCELLATION OF THE 2007 national and local elections will plunge the country into its worst political turmoil ever, a senior administration lawmaker warned yesterday.

Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco said the Consultative Commission's no-election proposal was indecent, immoral, improper and a "prescription to perdition" that should be scrapped.

He scored the ConCom for coming up with the proposal, saying he himself would campaign against amending the 1987 Constitution if Congress agreed to no-el.

"That proposal is a sure prescription to perdition. It will not only spell the demise of democracy but will also spawn the seeds of autocracy and dictatorship," Cuenco said.

"Those who voted for this provision are certainly lost in their analyses and translation of the political fundamentals now obtaining at this crucial juncture of the nation's history, and to borrow a familiar phrase: 'lost in transition,'" he said.

Cuenco said Charter change "should not be used as a medium to perpetuate those in power."

"The national interest must be upheld and personal interests and motivations must be sacrificed for the common weal. This country is still hobbled by many crises and we cannot afford to add more explosiveness into a very fragile and volatile political situation," he said.

"If this highly questionable provision will not be rejected by the current members of Congress, I will be one of those who will strongly campaign for the rejection of all the proposed amendments to the Constitution," he said.

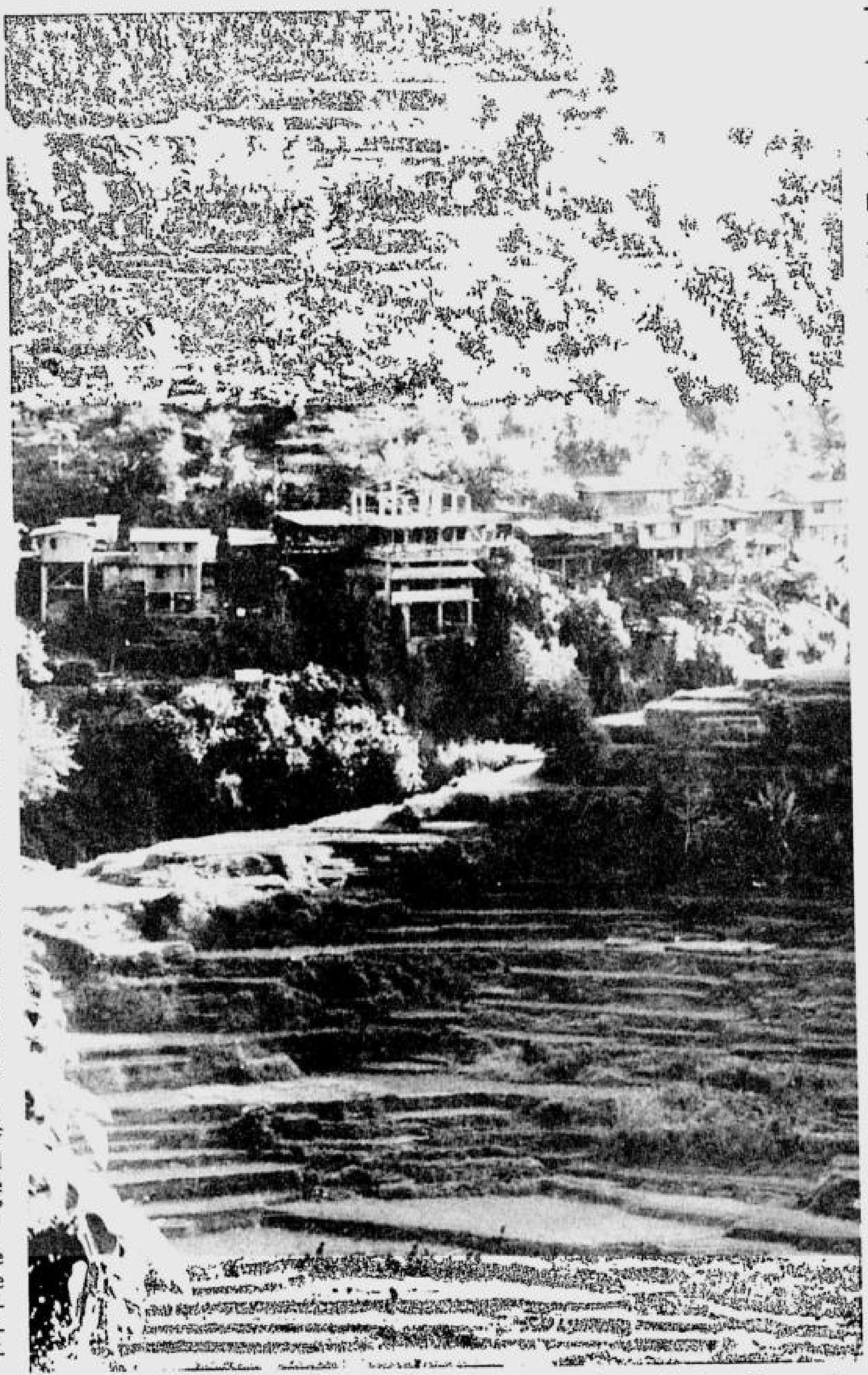
Cuenco said the ConCom's rationale for the proposal—that it would be difficult to survive the transition to a parliamentary form of government if there were a change in leaders—was "not only myopic but evidently self-serving."

"And if that isn't a bribe, I do not know what could be labeled a bribe. It is such a shame that a former UP [University of the Philippines] president would stoop so low to even have the gall to defend such a dishonorable provision," Cuenco said, referring to ConCom chair Jose Abueva.

With the current political crisis and the no-el proposal, Cuenco said he saw "not only greater uncertainties but also a much larger vortex for crises, both economic and political" in the year ahead.

"Congress has a duty to forestall and avert unnecessary evils that will add more fuel to the fires that spell greater ills for our people," he said.

"2006 should be a year for relief from the myriad troubles of 2005. We must all ensure that we are prepared to exorcise the many more demons lurking behind the corridors of power, and deny them any possible avenue to wreak havoc on our ailing country," he said.



PRESIDENT Arroyo was alarmed by the sight of shanties sprouting on the famed Banaue rice terraces and vowed to relocate the informal settlers.

PDI PHOTO

Banaue squatters alarm GMA

SQUATTERS HAVE STARTED COLONIZING the world-famous Banaue rice terraces in the northern Philippines, with potentially disastrous consequences for one of the country's top tourist draws, President Macapagal-Arroyo said on Monday. *(See related story on Page A14)*

The President visited the world-famous tourist spot in the Cordillera mountain range over the weekend and was alarmed by the mushrooming number of houses put up by informal settlers that blocked the view of the centuries-old man-made wonder, a Malacañang statement said.

Unless stopped, the building binge would persist "until the view of the majestic terraces are completely blocked from sight," the President said.

Ms Arroyo said she would set up a resettlement site in the region to keep the squatters out of the terraced mountain slopes, which were built and tended by the local mountain tribes and watered by mountain streams.

Regional tourism chief Purificacion Molintas told the President the number of squatters in the area had doubled.

Some 24 million people, or nearly 30 percent of the population, now live in upland areas, putting tremendous pressure on the dwindling forest cover, according to studies released last year by the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources. *AFP*

Bishops want role in crafting laws

By Christian V. Esguerra

BISHOPS AS LEGISLATORS?

A number of Roman Catholic bishops want a more active and relevant role in legislation, the job mainly of members of Congress, saying that lawmakers needed a lot of help "in the discernment of what is right and wrong."

Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla, former president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), yesterday proposed the establishment of a Bishops-Congressmen's Forum to facilitate a free exchange of ideas in crafting important laws.

In a statement, Capalla, a strong advocate of dialogues, said the forum was important considering that "almost every House bill has a moral dimension."

"There is always the element of right and wrong, of the just and the unjust, of the fair and the unfair, of the human and the inhuman," he said. "Here, the lawmakers need a lot of help in the discernment of what is right and wrong."

The proposal is a take-off from the existing Bishops-Businessmen's Conference.

In a previous interview, the Davao prelate said he was also contemplating a similar set-up between bishops and members of the media.

In the case of legislation, he said guidance and suggestions from bishops were important "because moral values generally underpin most of the social, economic, political and cultural situation and needs of our people."

Capalla earlier floated the idea during a gathering between seven Catholic congressmen and seven bishops, including pro-life advocates in Manila last July 4.

He said the proposal was "unanimously received and applauded."

Capalla said it was not enough that lawmakers conducted meetings with groups and communities, and public hearings on top of researches and surveys before introducing bills.

"It has been observed that (these) methods of fact-finding or data-gathering as aids in the lawmaking process have not been effectively used," he said.

"Or if they have done so, the results have not been able to ascertain one important element of the data: The moral concerns and needs of the people."

This was where the bishops could come in because "the dimension of right and wrong, of justice and injustice, that is, of moral values, is the responsibility and competence of spiritual leaders."

Religious press issue of Gloria's legitimacy

THE COUNTRY'S MAJOR RELIGIOUS congregations are not about to let go of the unresolved questions over the legitimacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

The Association of Major Religious Superiors (AMRSP) is set to meet with the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), seeking, among other goals, to consolidate their positions on the political crisis triggered by Ms Arroyo's alleged manipulation of the 2004 election results.

The gathering is set on Jan. 23 at the Pope Pius XII Catholic Center in Manila where the CBCP will also have its annual plenary assembly five days later.

"We're not giving up on the issue. We can't move forward until we find closure," Bro. Manuel de Leon, AMRSP vice chair and head of the Marist Brothers of the Philippines, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The AMRSP move came as Malacañang renewed its call for political leaders, including those in the opposition, to join President Macapagal-Arroyo in her national government of unity.

"All leaders who are for the national interest are welcome aboard," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said. "But we can't be held hostage by those who insist on bickering and slowing down the train of progress."

In a closed-door meeting at the Ateneo University in November, the AMRSP, representing 353 congregations, resolved it would not "surrender to apathy." The group then noted the prevailing sentiment not to make the President accountable for her alleged cheating anymore for a seeming lack of a better successor.

But consolidating the positions of the AMRSP and the CBCP might not be that easy. *Christian V. Esguerra and Christine O. Avendaño*

Customs chief vows hands-on management

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE NEW COMMISSIONER OF the Bureau of Customs yesterday vowed to take an active role in the revenue agency's operations, saying he would directly supervise all of its personnel down to the messenger, a position he himself used to occupy.

Napoleon Morales, whose controversial appointment drew flak because of allegations linking him to smuggling, also sought the support of his colleagues to enable the bureau to meet its collection target, citing teamwork as the key to success.

"To ensure the effective implementation of our programs, I am taking a hands-on management of the bureau. Accordingly, I will have a direct and personal supervision on all bureau personnel, if possible, down to the level of messenger," Morales said at the turnover ceremony at the BOC yesterday morning.

Starting as an office messenger at the BOC in 1968, Morales worked his way up to become an examiner, appraiser and district collector at the ports of Manila and Batangas. Prior to his appointment, Morales was chief of the bureau's Valuation Reference Information System, which monitors the valuation and classification of imported goods.

He replaced Alexander Arevalo, who was named acting BOC commissioner in July last year. Arevalo's predecessor Alberto Lina, who resigned after calling on the President to step down, also witnessed the turnover ceremony along with Finance Secretary Margarito Teves and Philippine Coast Guard Commandant Arthur Gosingan.

In his speech yesterday, Morales did not comment on the smuggling accusations against him in the graft case filed by Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes against customs officials in Batangas.

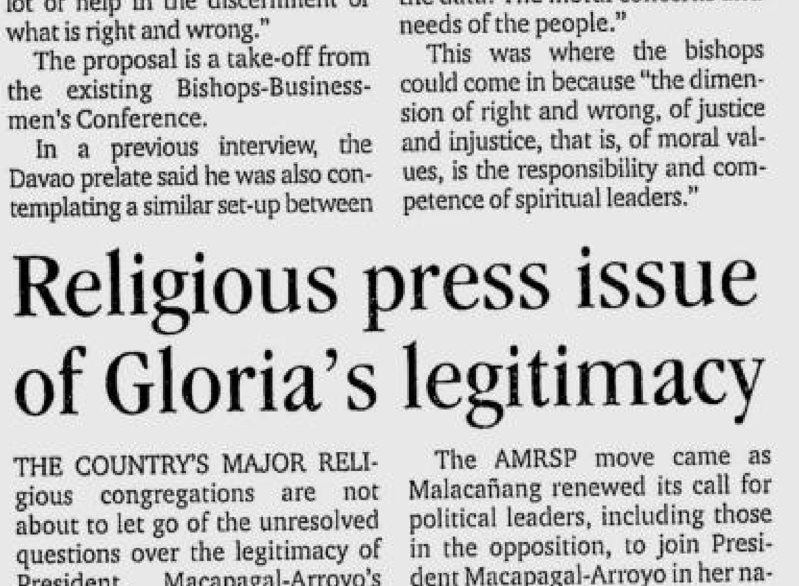
The complaint involved a misdeclared corn starch shipment that was released and levied the wrong amount in taxes, allegedly to the detriment of the government.

But in a recent interview with the INQUIRER, Morales denied being involved in smuggling.

"There is no pending case against me. I hope they will give me a chance to show what I can do and judge me based on what I accomplish," Morales said.

Yesterday, he noted that the BOC was facing intense pressure to meet its increased collection target of P192 billion, which was why the bureau's employees should step up their act. *(See related story in Business, Page B1)*

"Non-performing assets must thus give way to those who can give extra effort to achieve the assigned target. I am underscoring the extra effort because under these extraordinary times, there is no room for mediocrity and poor performance," he said.



NEW CUSTOMS Commissioner Napoleon Morales (right) is congratulated by former bureau OIC Alexander Arevalo while Finance Secretary Margarito Teves looks on.

REM ZAMORA

SOFTER, prettier, friendlier security force eases travelers' apprehensions at the Naia. ROGER MARGALLO

Pretty in fatigues at airports

By Nikko Dizon

PRETTIER, FRIENDLIER AND PERhaps just as effective as their armed male counterparts, 30 unarmed women from the Armed Forces of the Philippines began providing frontline security services at Manila's international and domestic airport terminals yesterday.

The deployment of the unarmed soldiers from the AFP's Women Auxiliary Corps (WAC) is aimed at providing the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and the Manila Domestic Airport with a friendlier and less intimidating atmosphere even amid stringent security measures, according to Brig. Gen. Angel Atutubo (ret.), the Manila International Airport Authority's assistant general manager for security and emergency services.

Unlike male soldiers who often look nasty and ready for combat, women soldiers come off as friendlier to passengers, even when they are in military uniform, Atutubo said.

Armed soldiers are deployed at the airports during times of heightened alert, such as the holiday season.

Yesterday, the authorities decided to pull out the armed Marines and replace them with the women soldiers, who are tasked with providing security visibility by conducting foot patrols in the capital's three airport terminals.

Atutubo said the soldiers' presence could deter luggage theft, especially during peak hours at the airports as well as discourage mulcters and pickpockets from preying on passengers.

"The AFP also wants to show that our soldiers are not only for combat but they could also render public service," Atutubo said.

The deployment of the women soldiers at the airport terminals is a joint project of the AFP and the Miaa, as part of the airport authority's recently relaunched SMILE program aimed at promoting friendliness and hospitality starting at the airport.

Immigration exceeds target

AFTER THE CONTROVERSIES IT WAS EMbroiled in during the past months, the Bureau of Immigration at least ended 2005 on a positive note when it came to its earnings.

By the end of November, the BI had surpassed its 2005 target collection of P1.120 billion, earning a total of P1.126 billion and maintaining itself in the "billionaire's club" of government agencies for the fifth straight year.

Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. said the bureau's collection during the 11-month period was also P114.7 million higher than its earnings in the same period in 2004.

The BI expects to receive more collections from various other international ports nationwide and these, along with collections for December, will drive up its income further, according to BI finance chief Elvira Presado.

"Our conservative estimate is that our total collection for the year could reach P1.2 billion, or P80 million more than our assigned target for 2005," Presado said in a statement.

The bulk of the bureau's earnings comes from visa extension fees, and fines and penalties imposed on overstaying and deported aliens. It also earns money from approving visas for foreigners applying for resident and immigrant status. *Leila B. Salaverria*

SuperFerry passenger rescued off Bataan

FISHERMEN RESCUED ON NEW Year's Eve a 38-year-old man who reportedly jumped off an interisland ferry that was making its way to Iloilo from Manila, the Philippine Coast Guard reported.

The man, identified as Rafael Arebalo of Fairview, Quezon City, was found drifting in the sea off Lamao, Bataan.

According to the PCG, Arebalo jumped off the SuperFerry 16 on Friday while the boat was near Sangley Point, Cavite. The motive for his action was unclear.

On Saturday afternoon, the crew of the fishing boat Nasa spotted Arebalo in the sea and hauled him on board. He was later turned over to the PCG detachment in Lamao.

PCG investigation revealed that Arebalo was traveling under the name of his brother-in-law, Eliseo Portacion, who had bought his ticket in Manila.

Arebalo is expected to be brought to the PCG's National Capital Region office for further investigation.

Leila B. Salaverria

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Corrections

YESTERDAY'S front-page story—"Senate kept secret votes rejecting US bases"—misstated that former Sen. Jose W. Diokno was in the gallery as senators cast and explained their votes on the US bases issue in 1991. It was former Sen. Lorenzo Tañada who was present during the voting. Diokno died in 1987 while Tañada passed away in May 1992.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 31 issue, a Saturday Special article on Page A3-2—"Retrospective honors Pete Lacaba"—misstated that Ricky Davao had never acted in a movie with a script by Pete Lacaba. Davao played a supporting role in Lacaba's "Eskapo: The Serge Osmeña-Geny Lopez Story."

* * *

IN THE SAME article, the names of two visual artists were misstated. They were Gelacio Guillermo—not Horacio Guillermo—and Ana Achacoso—not Achocoso.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 30 issue, a front-page story—"Centenarian recalls Man from Calamba"—misstated that the first Philippine Republic was established on June 12, 1898. The correct date was Jan. 23, 1899. On June 12, 1898, Emilio Aguinaldo declared Philippine independence.

According to the same story, Aguinaldo named Mariano Ponce diplomatic representative to Japan after proclaiming the republic. Ponce was named diplomatic agent to Japan in 1898, after the declaration of independence but before the inauguration of the Republic in 1899.

Gingoyon wanted to die with untarnished name

By Jhunnex Napallacan,
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—IN THE END, SLAIN JUDGE Henrick Gingoyon got what he had always wished for—an untarnished name and reputation for integrity up to the time of his death.

A source close to the family said that Gingoyon's siblings were taking his death calmly because they knew that the judge's goal in life was fulfilled.

Gingoyon, a former human rights lawyer, wanted to help the country by dispensing fair justice while keeping his name unblemished and his integrity and credibility intact.

"He worried that his name would be tarnished. He showed displeasure when [any] colleague in the judiciary was being questioned. That's why, if he had to go, he wanted to keep his integrity intact because he really valued his name," the source said.

The source recalled being on a beach in Talisay City with the judge when Gingoyon was still a prosecutor and watching a man who was unable to walk being assisted by two persons.

The source said Gingoyon told him that he did not want to be an invalid because he wanted to serve the country until the last moments of his life.

"I think he was able to fulfill that because he really died for not compromising his principles. He stood up to defend the justice system of the country," the source said.

Gingoyon's ailing mother, Conchita, 84, was told of her son's death on Sunday during an emotional meeting with the rest of Gingoyon family on Urgello Street in Barangay Sambag Uno here.

One of Conchita's grandchildren who asked not to be named said her lola did not want to talk about her son's death.

Senior cop . . .

From page A1

The source said Gingoyon had filed an affidavit on the incident with the special operations division of the National Bureau of Investigation.

In the affidavit, "Gingoyon clearly said it was Barcena who could be behind the strafing of his house in 2002," the source said.

The source said Gingoyon's house was shot at by armed assailants in a maroon Nissan Sentra at about 2:20 a.m. on March 12, 2002.

Reached through his mobile phone yesterday, Barcena, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class of 1983, refused to be interviewed over the phone and insisted that this correspondent meet with him personally at his Camp Crame office.

"This case is sensitive so it would be best that we talk face to face," he said.

Barcena refused to confirm that he had been summoned for questioning but admitted to having filed several cases against Gingoyon and that the victim had also filed cases against him.

Barcena said he was also willing to produce the documents pertaining to the cases.

'Only person with grudge'

In his four-page NBI affidavit, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, Gingoyon said Barcena was "the only person whom I could say has a grudge against me."

Gingoyon said the bad blood between him and Barcena started when he dismissed the drug charges that the police official had filed against two Chinese nationals who were allegedly caught in a drug buy-bust operation.

He said he had also filed a contempt charge against Barcena after the latter had forcibly taken a car belonging to the Chinese nationals from the custody of the court's sheriff on March 25, 2000. He said Barcena had illegally confiscated the car from the drug suspects.

Barcena, who had then headed the RDEO, and his men received medals of commendation for the arrest of the Chinese.

"But the fakery of their buy-bust operation was soon unmasked by (Barcena) himself … During the hearing, they did not only contradict each other, they also contradicted themselves," Gingoyon said in his affidavit.

After acquitting the drug suspects, Gingoyon said he asked the Philippine National Police to strip Barcena of the awards.

Career in limbo

Gingoyon said Barcena was convicted of contempt on Dec. 12, 2000.

He said Barcena had admitted that because of the cases, the RDEO was dismantled and he faced a string of administrative cases at the National Police Commission.

Gingoyon said the cases put Barcena's career "in limbo."

Also yesterday, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he had ordered the NBI to probe the Gingoyon killing, and in particular to investigate the dispute with Barcena as a possible motive for the killing.

"Well, that seems to be the indicator, that seems to be the first lead because he (Gingoyon) executed an affidavit, although I understand it's not sworn to, against that police official," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez said that although the police could very well investigate the killing, he had ordered the NBI to look into it as well, "considering the importance of the case."

Special security unit

Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban yesterday proposed the creation of a special unit of law enforcers to protect, and investigate the murders of, judges in the wake of the killing of Gingoyon.

He said the Supreme Court justices met yesterday and discussed measures to protect the country's judges, including the creation of a special security unit to be patterned after the US Marshal Service, a special bureau under the US Department of Justice, to provide security for judges and when crimes occur, to "make sure that perpetrators are brought to justice."

Panganiban said the high court justices had expressed dismay at "the killing of nine other judges" in the past.

"You know judges are supposed to deliver justice to the people, but when injustice is committed against judges, it's very important that justice be given to them, otherwise how can the judges be expected to give justice to the people if justice to them is not attended to," he told reporters.

Killing justice

The killing of judges is tantamount to "killing justice," the Chief Justice said.

He said it had the effect of "setting back the arms of the law and … delaying the rendering of justice in so many other cases pending in the court of that particular judge."

Panganiban said he had formed a panel to study the creation of the proposed security unit that would be similar to the US marshal system which is "dedicated to solving cases against justices and judges, especially cases involving assault on their persons, whether resulting in their death or otherwise."

Malacañang said it was confident that the killing of Gingoyon, the judge who had ordered the government to pay billions of pesos to the Piatco consortium that built the mothballed Naia Terminal 3, would not cause any delay in the opening of Naia 3, even as President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered a swift probe of Gingoyon's murder.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the President had been monitoring the Gingoyon case and expected authorities to wrap up the investigation soon.

"She also supports all effective means to accord protection to judges in the performance of their duties, so that justice shall not be assaulted in this manner," Bunye said in a statement.

The Pasay City judge was ambushed on Saturday by two motorcycle-riding gunmen as he was walking home in the town of Bacoor, Cavite.

What is really immoral?

We, the Constitutional Consultative Commission, propose a shift to parliamentary-federal government and the liberalization of our economic policies on foreign investments in our economy and natural resources. That is the substance of the report we submitted to the President on December 16, which she has transmitted to Congress.

After much debate among ourselves and nationwide consultations, we submitted a report that Charter changes are needed to address the grave problems facing the country. For this we have been accused of being 'immoral' because of one transitory provision postponing the elections in 2007 to 2010.

But what really is immoral?

It is immoral and unacceptable if we do not change the system of governance that prevents us from effectively addressing:

- the pervasive poverty, unemployment, low income, and homelessness of our people;
- the widening social inequality, injustice, criminality, rebellion, and now terrorism as a local and global threat;
- our severely inadequate public services and infrastructure;
- our weak rule of law, and lack of public accountability in government, the political parties, the private sector, and the media; and
- the widespread graft and corruption in the government and the private sector.

We believe endless political infighting and bickering in our present presidential-unitary system have worsened our problems and made the country politically unstable and unable to catch up in a region of leap-frogging economies.

Charter change to stop 'authoritarian alternatives'

We seek Charter change both as the vehicle for substantial reforms and as a unifying instrument to blunt violent and authoritarian alternatives from both the Left and Right as 'solutions.' The survival of our constitutional democracy is the real challenge before us.

We implore our leaders and citizens to look at the substance of our proposed amendments to the 1987 Constitution, instead of focusing on one transitory provision.

We have proposed 'No elections in 2007' as a transitory provision for a smooth transition to parliamentary-federal government because the necessary institutions for credible elections might not be in place by then. It would be divisive and costly to the government and the people to hold the elections so soon after the national plebiscite on the proposed constitutional reforms. This is our majority decision.

Our Consultative Commission only recommends changes in the Constitution. It is Congress as a constituent assembly that will make the final proposals to the people.

Above all, our task was to put together proposals for Charter changes that would help transform our political institutions and system of governance. This we have done.

……

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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

First woman Supreme Court justice passes away at 92

By Fe Zamora

RETIRED JUSTICE CECILIA MUÑOZ-Palma, the first woman justice of the Supreme Court, passed away at 5:55 p.m. yesterday at St. Luke's Hospital. She was 92.

Palma was rushed to the hospital at about 7 a.m. yesterday after her daughter Pearl found her in a deep stupor.

"Pearl woke her up, but mama did not respond anymore," Ric Cardema, who is married to Palma's eldest daughter Pearl, told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Cardema said the feisty woman justice had been hospitalized several times before due to emphysema and asthma, and their complications.

The former justice's remains will lie in state at the Mt. Carmel Church on Broadway in Quezon City. The funeral will be decided later, Cardema said.

Aside from Pearl, Cardema said, Palma left behind sons Thadeus and Gustave, 15 grandchildren and over a dozen great-grandchildren.

On Nov. 22, the Palma brood had a family reunion to mark her 92nd birthday, Cardema said.

"We thought that she would go anytime," he said.

Her last public appearance was at the Manila Hotel reception and program marking the retirement of Chief Justice Hilario Davide two weeks ago.

Standing ovation

Celing, as friends called her, was always known for her great courage and straight talk.

In 1975, then Justice Secretary Vicente Abad Santos called her "ingrata (ingrate)" after she delivered a speech critical of President Ferdinand Marcos, who had appointed her to the high court two years earlier. Here she demanded a return to the rule of law—at the height of Marcos' martial law rule. Her peers and members of the bar gave this "ingrate" a five-minute standing ovation.

She also went against the tide with a dissenting opinion that paved the way for the release of nationalist and Marcos critic Sen. Jose Diokno, who had been detained for more than 700 days without charges.

Dictator-proof

The battlecry that won her a National Assembly seat in the 1984 Batasang Pambansa elections was "One Marcos cannot stop us all."

In 1986, after the Marcos regime was ousted, Palma was appointed head of the Constitutional Commission that drafted the "dictator-proof" 1987 Constitution.

Born on Nov. 22, 1913, the St. Scholastica's College high school valedictorian went on to the University of the Philippines for college and law school. She topped the bar exams in 1937 with a 92.6-percent rating.

Palma rose from the local courts to the Court of Appeals; she served on the Supreme Court from Oct. 29, 1973, to Nov. 22, 1978.

Pope Paul VI gave her the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross in 1977. She won the Catholic Mass Media Award and the Sagisag ng Kagitingan Award in 1978, and the Ninoy Aquino Movement Award in Chicago in 1985.

Then President Joseph Estrada appointed her to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office in 1998. Her stint would later be controversial because of allegations that P430 million in PCSO funds were channeled to finance the First Family's pet projects.

Palma vehemently denied the claims, saying that under her chairmanship, the PCSO board had not been Estrada's "rubber stamp." *With Jamie Alarcon, PDI Research*

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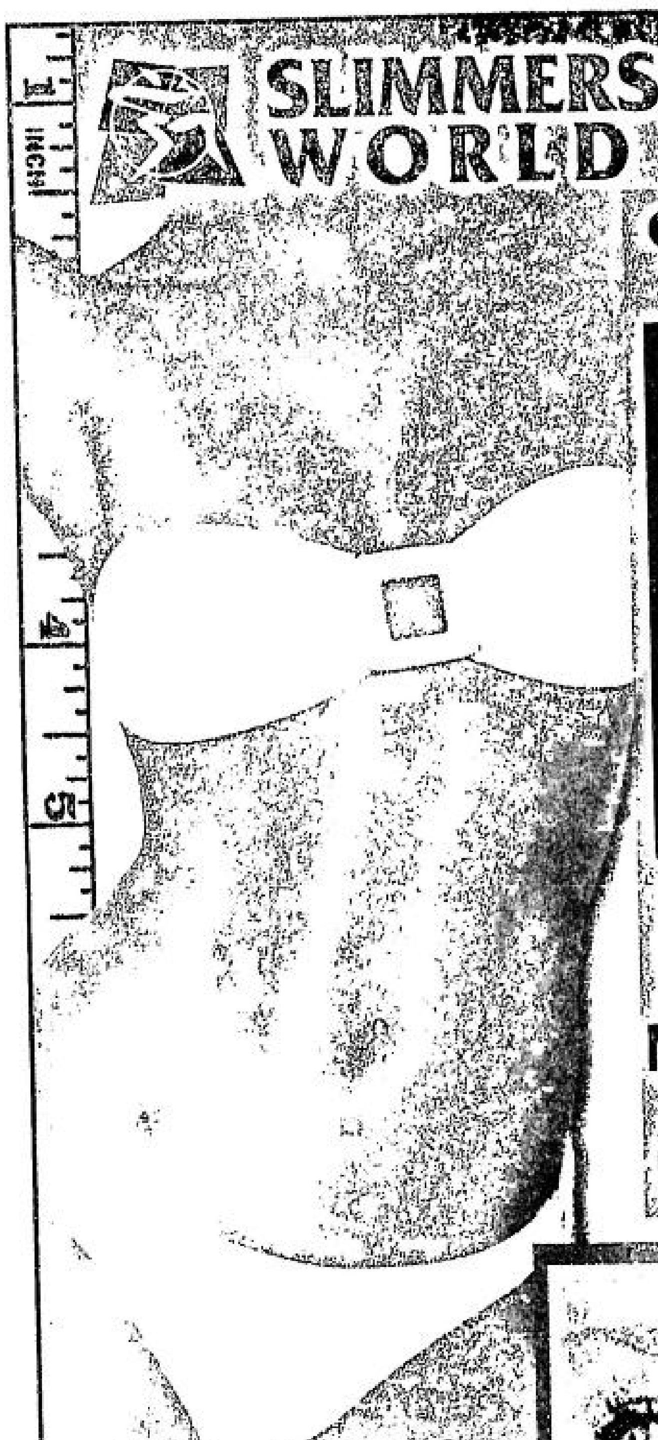

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Gov't asserts custody over 4 US Marines

From page A1

implications of the rape case on overall bilateral relations with the US.

"This is an isolated incident and while the case may indeed be a test of some provisions of the VFA (Visiting Forces Agreement), it should not be a test of our time-honored friendship with the United States," Bunye said.

Fighting prosecutor

In Olongapo City, lead state prosecutor Prudencio Jalandoni said he was ready to file a motion in court seeking the transfer and detention in Olongapo of the four Americans charged with raping the 22-year-old woman at the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1.

Jalandoni told the INQUIRER that the warrants and subsequent arrests would be "assertions" by the court of its jurisdiction over the case and the accused.

The Department of Foreign Affairs formally sought custody of the servicemen on Nov. 16 but the US Embassy has yet to reply to it.

In a statement, Romulo appeared to clarify the statements made by Gonzalez.

Romulo said that "we (the justice and foreign affairs departments) are in full agreement, we continue to assert that this is an extraordinary case under the VFA and the Philippines should have actual physical custody."

Legal interpretation

Romulo also said the Department of Justice would be the agency that would provide "legal interpretation of our relevant treaty obligations."

He said it was based on the opinion of the DOJ that his department "continues to negotiate for the custody of the suspects."

Romulo explained later in his statement that "any differences between the Philippines and the US on this issue would be settled through diplomacy."

"While we have close relations with many countries, we sometimes have differences on certain specific issues, which we settle through dialogue and diplomacy," he added.

Romulo's statement was silent about the role of the local court on the matter of custody or the weight of the arrest warrants that were expected to be issued against the accused in the next few days.

Negotiate first

Gonzalez earlier told the INQUIRER that the Philippines must first negotiate with the United States to turn over custody of the Americans before arrest warrants could be served.

"We cannot arrest them and break the treaty unilaterally," Gonzalez had said. "That can become an unfriendly act with a country that is aligned with us."

The VFA allows the United States, upon request, to take custody of the accused for the entire length of the trial.

For his part, Jalandoni said the issuance of arrest warrants should not lead to a unilateral abrogation of the VFA.

He said the VFA had a provision stating that the Philippines would have primary jurisdiction over US military personnel who commit offenses while on authorized liberty or pass in the Philippines.

Defending RP dignity

The four US Marines—Staff Sgt. Chad Brian Carpentier and Lance Corporals Daniel Smith, Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis—were on liberty or rest and recreation when the alleged rape took place.

According to Jalandoni, the rape case was "not only about defending the dignity" of the Filipino woman but "also about asserting the sovereign rights of the Philippines."

If an arrest warrant was issued for the US soldiers' Filipino driver, Timoteo Soriano Jr., and none were issued for the four, Jalandoni said that would smack of discrimination.

"Philippine laws apply to everyone, including foreigners who are accused of crimes here," he said.

No full immunity

Citing a provision in the treaty, he added: "The VFA does not give US personnel conditional or full immunity from the Philippines' laws."

"The US government should follow our procedures," Jalandoni said.

He said he was hopeful about the sense of fairness of US authorities.

On Tuesday, the case is to be raffled off among three regional trial courts here. Branch 73 is handled by Judge Renato Dilag, Branch 74 by Judge Ramon Caguiao and Branch 75 by Judge Avelino Lazo.

Lawyering for US?

Gonzalez drew fire from all sides for his statement warning that arresting the four US Marines could imperil Philippine-US relations.

Opposition lawmakers called on Gonzalez to immediately resign for "lawyering" for the Americans, while a senior administration lawmaker dismissed his view that any arrest would be an "unfriendly act" against the United States.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero, Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano scored Gonzalez for supposedly giving legal advice to the accused Americans, prioritizing their concerns rather than the country's interests, and allegedly deliberately giving a misleading interpretation of the VFA.

House Deputy Majority Leader Edcel Lagman said upholding Philippine sovereignty by taking custody of the accused "cannot be considered an unfriendly act against the US," adding that surrendering sovereignty "to a foreign power is a reprehensible and unpatriotic act."

Senators also chided Gonzalez.

'Totally wrong'

"If Secretary Gonzalez is saying that we should negotiate first before a warrant is issued, I believe he's totally wrong," Senate President Franklin Drilon said.

By proposing that the government negotiate with the United States first, Gonzalez was virtually scuttling the government's efforts at gaining jurisdiction of the suspects, Drilon pointed out.

The government, Drilon stressed, should instead allow the judicial process "to take its course" until the arrest warrants are issued, and then afterward negotiate the custody of the accused with the United States.

"Let the judicial process be completed. After the issuance of the warrants of arrest, then the Philippines can start negotiating the custody of the four accused instead of the Americans taking custody," he said.

Surrender of RP rights

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson also twitted Gonzalez for "prematurely" yielding the government's right to assert jurisdiction over the four Marines in the absence of any request by the US government to take custody of them.

"It's premature for Gonzalez to just surrender our right to have custody over the accused," he said in a phone interview. *With reports from Philip C. Tubeza, TJ Burgonio*

Widows of 3 brods who died on Christmas: Cop did it

From page A1

legedly by a Quezon City police officer on Dec. 25. The third brother collapsed and died of a heart attack on learning that his younger brothers had succumbed to gunshot wounds.

With a child in tow, the widows yesterday filed administrative charges of grave misconduct against Senior Insp. Michael Sanchez. This was in addition to the criminal charges of murder filed against Sanchez with the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

Saying they were after justice any way they could get it, the widows—Marilou, Regina and Thelma Jimeno—also sought assurances from senior police officials that the police would not coddle one of their own.

"Administrative sanctions are clearly not enough, but we are pursing administrative charges as well because we want him to be dismissed from the service," Marilou said.

A referee, an architect

"We don't want cops like him in the police."

Regina's 3-year-old son, EJ, came with his mother.

Marilou's husband, Froilan, a referee in the Philippine Basketball League, and Regina's husband, Arnold, an architect, were riding on scooters along General Luis corner Damong Maliit Streets in Quezon City when they collided with a Toyota Revo at 10:55 a.m. on Christmas Day.

Sanchez and his relatives were in the car.

The Jimenos and Sanchez had a heated argument. Then the cop took out an M-16 rifle and shot the brothers, police said.

A brother of the Jimenos, Ferdinand, and sister Evangeline brought the two brothers to the hospital.

Told that his brothers did not make it, Ferdinand collapsed and died that same day.

Arnold was 28, Froilan 36, and Ferdinand 39.

The widows spoke to police spokesperson Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil and Director Marcelo Ele, chief of the Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management.

Restrictive custody

Ele immediately placed Sanchez under restrictive custody for 90 days and ordered the Quezon City police to bring him to the Philippine National Police-Custodial Center.

Sanchez is not a detainee, Ele said.

"He is restricted to the custodial center. He may leave its premises but only with a guard," Ele said.

The official said he wanted to eliminate any possibility of the cop escaping.

"My assumption is that within 90 days, the fiscal's office would have finished its investigation and decided (whether or not to pursue the case). In the meantime, we want Sanchez under restrictive custody," Ele said.

No whitewash

Ele said this would show the police resolve not to whitewash the case.

Sanchez has 10 days to answer the charge of grave misconduct, according to Senior Insp. Roman Loreto, a DIDM lawyer.

So far, the Jimeno family said they were satisfied with the police handling of the case.

"They're doing their job," said Christopher, another Jimeno brother.

"I have to be strong, I have kids to look after," said Marilou. Froilan had left her with three kids, the youngest of whom is only eight months old.

Mourning in New Year

Arnold had two children, a one-year-old and a three-year-old, while Ferdinand had four, the oldest of whom is only 13.

"We spent the New Year together, but we were not celebrating, we were mourning," Marilou said. "Deep inside me, I still cannot (accept it)."

The pain had cut deeper because Ferdinand, the brother who succumbed to a heart attack, was to have turned 40 on Dec. 31.

His birthday had added flourish to the family's previous New Year celebrations.

Mother's strength

Evangeline said their mother has been a great source of strength.

"My mother is strong. It's me they're worried about," she said. "My in-laws lost a husband. I lost three brothers, and I cannot get over my grief."

GMA announces P35-B subsidy for rice, noodles, other food items

From page A1

Favila said the government's plan was to expand its network of rolling stores selling noodles, rice and other basic commodities at steep discounts.

"We are deploying more rolling stores not only in Metro Manila but also in depressed communities in Metro Cebu and Metro Davao," he said.

The trade secretary said the government was careful not to "flood" the market with subsidized noodles and rice products because it could affect the operations of noodle makers and rice dealers selling to the mainstream market.

"This is the reason why our subsidized noodles and rice are sold only in tightly monitored rolling stores to prevent any unscrupulous groups from taking advantage of the program," Favila said.

Major fare

Because instant noodles have become a major fare of poor Filipinos probably next only to rice, the government has added noodles among the incentives for poor students to attend classes.

Ms Arroyo said she had asked her Cabinet to release P35 billion immediately to help the poor and to enable the country "to move forward with the speed of light."

She said the fund would finance propoor programs such as education, housing, health, food and public works.

Ms Arroyo based the amount of P35 billion in savings on the difference between the actual budget deficit estimated at P145 billion last year and the projected budget deficit of P180 billion, which was achieved through better revenue collections and lower spending.

P10 billion, not P35 billion

But a televised program last night with the President, Budget Secretary Romulo Neri said only P10 billion was available for spending by the government since this represented the actual cash raised from better-than-expected revenues.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the President's order to spend the P35 billion could still be realized if the local government units acceded to her request to channel their surplus funds to the priority infrastructure projects identified by Malacañang.

Neri said the President had ordered the early release of at least P17.5 billion due the LGUs from their internal revenue allotment from last year so that they could spend it within the next three months.

Neri said the government wanted to spend the money wisely in order to minimize the inflationary impact of higher government spending.

Feel good

Teves said the government's strategy was to step up spending in the early part of this year and to boost investor confidence in the hope that this "feel good" momentum would be carried through to the end of 2006.

He said the government had to make some "pump priming" this quarter to ensure that the economic gains from last year would be carried over this year.

Teves explained that by pump priming the economy, the government would be able to create new jobs, particularly for the poor.

Boy in candy store

Administration Sen. Ralph Recto urged Malacañang to be prudent in spending government savings and to prioritize the health, education and agriculture sectors.

Recto said that while the President had the prerogative to tap savings to augment government programs, she should rein in the government from going on a "mindless splurging of public funds."

"It should not act like a little boy let loose inside a candy store," he said in a statement.

Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means, cautioned the President against diverting funds from the spending programs authorized in the 2005 General Appropriations Act.

"The use of savings should be guided by the reenacted 2005 budget. While some items may change, the framework will still be provided by the 2005 GAA because that is the governing law," he said.

The 2005 national budget is expected to be reenacted until the end of March.

Farm-to-market road

During her visit to this tourist town at the end of her six-day annual Christmas holiday in Baguio City, Ms Arroyo inaugurated the P17.3-million Nangonogan-Aguid farm-to-market road upgrading project.

The project is part of the Baguio-Bontoc-Banaue Road, also known as the Halsema Highway.

"To pump-prime the economy and bring the dividends of growth to the poorest households of our society, the project that we inaugurated today exemplifies what's in store for our people with that P35 billion pump-priming fund," she said.

She also directed the Department of Budget and Management to release P500 million for the construction of farm-to-market roads in other parts of the country in the first quarter of the year.

The President flew here by helicopter to meet with local officials before returning to Malacañang.

While here, she also witnessed the signing of an agreement between the local government and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to honor and acknowledge the practical application of indigenous knowledge in forest management. *With a report from TJ Burgonio*

For 14th year, Joker is Congress 'Kuripot King'

From page A1

"Kuripot King" (tightwad).

For the 14th straight year since he became a congressman in 1992 and a senator in 2001, Arroyo has stood out with the unofficial title by managing to spend the least among lawmakers.

The senator from Bicol and Makati City spent P11,137,072 in 2004, a cool P5 million less than the average spent by his fellow senators for their official duties, as shown in the Commission on Audit's itemized list of amounts paid to and incurred by each senator last year.

In 2000, his last year in the House of Representatives, Joker spent only P3.1 million in a chamber where congressmen spent an average of P5 million.

Flavier close second

Arroyo's frugality was approximated only by Sen. Juan Flavier, the former health secretary who is the "poorest" senator, who spent P12,418,931.

In the medium range, spending between P14.7 million and P15.8 million, were Senators Edgardo Angara, Sergio Osmeña III, Manuel Villar, Panfilo Lacson and Ramon Magsaysay Jr.

The Senate's high rollers who spent more than P16 million apiece were Senators Ralph Recto, Senate President Franklin Drilon, Rodolfo Biazon, Luisa Ejercito-Estrada, Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

Recto, biggest spender

Recto, chair of the busy Senate committee on ways and means, spent P16.7 million, the most, followed by the Senate President who spent P16.3 million.

The 2004 expenditures were incurred by 32 senators, including eight who bowed out of office in 2004 and the 12 senators who were elected in May 2004.

When it comes to high-spending, senators crossed party lines.

Former Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda, who ran for vice president, and former Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III, who both served only six months in the Senate in 2004, spent P11.2 million each, or more than what Arroyo spent for the whole year.

The expenses included the salaries and local and foreign travels of the senators and their staff, meetings and conferences, professional and consultancy fees, office supplies and materials, rentals of equipment and office space, and miscellaneous expenses.

Not a cent for travel

Arroyo did not use a single centavo of taxpayer money for foreign travel, as did Senators Pia Cayetano, Drilon, Loi Ejercito and her son Jinggoy, Juan Ponce Enrile, Flavier, Richard Gordon, Lacson, Lito Lapid, Alfredo Lim, Jamby Madrigal, Ramon Magsaysay Jr., Sergio Osmeña III, Pangilinan, Pimentel, Recto, Mar Roxas and Manuel Villar.

The footloose among the incumbent senators, as indicated by their foreign travel expenses, were Senators Biazon, chair of the defense committee; Miriam Defensor-Santiago, chair of the foreign relations committee, and Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., who spent P382.4 million, P388.3 million and P76 million, respectively. The senators spent a uniform P224,400 for local travel.

Biazon topped the spenders for meetings and conferences with P1.7 million while Arroyo kept it to a bare minimum at P112,000.

Highest consultancy fees

The highest consultancy fees were incurred by Angara, chair of the committee on banks, who spent P1.4 million. Arroyo, chair of the Senate blue ribbon committee, spent zero in this category.

Drilon and Pangilinan did not spend a centavo for office supplies, while Osmeña spent P800,000.

For rental of office space and equipment, the biggest spender was Osmeña who spent P1 million. Arroyo and the majority of senators did not spend a centavo.

Arroyo, however, was among those who spent the most in extraordinary miscellaneous expenses, in the P300,000 range.

One-man office

Arroyo spent only P963,580 for the salaries and benefits of his staff while others spent as much as P8 million.

This is because Arroyo has been known to function as a one-man office, in Congress when he only had his driver, and in the Senate where he allowed himself to hire one or two staff members in addition to his personal driver.

In the House, Arroyo answered phone calls—if and when he happened to be in his office—wrote his own press releases, asked the pages to retrieve his mail, which he answered personally and in long hand.

In the Senate, Arroyo retained his habits. During his first year, Osmeña complained how he would pass by Arroyo's office and find no one there, while Angara noted it was Arroyo's driver who often answered the phone.

The extremely accessible Arroyo still writes his own press releases, though they are now computer-printed, and holds press conferences without the aid of any staff member. He just drops by the press room, where he lingers to chat with reporters over free coffee from the press office.

One of the most sought-after senators for his timely and quotable comments on the hot issues of the day, the senator dubbed as a maverick administration senator, rose to prominence as an anti-martial law crusader, served as executive secretary during the Aquino administration, and clinched a seat in the Senate after his role as prosecutor in the Senate impeachment trial of now detained President Joseph Estrada.

Arroyo has said being frugal with the people's money was not something to be ashamed of.

Tutors push for release of allowance

A MILITANT TEACHERS' GROUP WARNED yesterday of continued restiveness among the country's nearly half a million public school teachers, saying they would continue to press for the release of their unpaid cost-of-living allowances (Cola).

Benjo Basas, spokesperson of the Metro Manila-based Partido ng Manggagawa Teachers Committee, charged in a statement that the teachers' Cola had been "unlawfully denied" them for 16 years now.

The group filed a petition in 1989 asking the Supreme Court to nullify circulars of the Department of Budget and Management integrating government employees' Colas into their basic salaries. The group claimed to represent around 140,000 teachers at the time.

"We foresee another bad or even worse year," said Basas, a teacher from Baesa High School and a director of Caloocan Public School Teachers Association. "Up to this time, no one from the government has shown interest in supporting our claims for our cost-of-living allowance which (has) been unlawfully denied us for more than 16 years. This amid the favorable court decisions for the employees of other government agencies and offices."

Melchor Cayabyab, head of the Manila Teachers' Dignity Coalition, also predicted harder times ahead for teachers.

"Indeed, 2005 has been a tough year for us public educators. Along with the entire working people, we suffered from almost weekly oil price increases that caused the skyrocketing prices of basic commodities and services," he said in a statement.

"We thought this government would give us breathing space in the latter part of the year. But our already dismal conditions worsened when no less than Malacañang itself pushed the enactment and implementation of the VAT reform law this November. This for us was another fatal blow."

Cayabyab, 30, is a teacher at Araullo High School and was hailed two years ago as one Manila's outstanding teachers.

He said he was a frequent client of loan agencies and his take-home pay has been reduced to P3,000 a month.

Aside from payment of their Cola and immediate salary increases, the teachers are also demanding passage of House Bill No. 3004, which seeks to upgrade their job grades and salaries.

Alcuin Papa

Defensor says he'd rather stay at DENR

ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY MICHAEL DEfensor said yesterday he would rather remain at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources than be moved over to Malacañang, as some recent reports have had it, as President Macapagal-Arroyo's chief of staff.

In an interview, Defensor said he had already told the President about his preference but added that he'd comply with her decision even if it would be contrary to his wish.

"I have even said that I'm willing to leave the Cabinet if it's needed to make way for a unity Cabinet (where members of the opposition would occupy posts in the President's official family)," Defensor told the INQUIRER.

Defensor said that he had already accomplished some of his short-term goals as environment secretary and that he was in position to carry out his medium and long-term goals in the department.

"I told the President I'd rather stay and finish the goals that we've set in the department," the secretary said.

The DENR, during Defensor's watch, has helped spearhead the country's bid to earn billions of pesos from a revitalized mining industry.

Defensor has also started instituting reforms in the logging sector, including canceling some timber license agreements and integrated forest management agreements that had been found to have been used by their respective holders to poach logs in unauthorized areas.

He, however, recently came under fire for allowing the San Jose Timber Corp. of Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile to continue operations in Samar after 26 years of a logging moratorium in the province.

Defensor was since convinced by the bishops in the province to take back the order and bring back a total log ban to Samar.

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Ukraine accuses Russia of destabilization

KIEV—UKRAINE'S FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS ACcused Moscow of seeking to destabilize the country's economy by cutting its natural gas supply, amid a pricing row which is already affecting supply to European nations.

Russia's state-controlled energy firm Gazprom announced earlier Sunday it was cutting off supplies to Ukraine, which depends on Russia for around a third of its natural gas import needs.

The move followed the expiry of a deadline for Kiev to agree to a more than fourfold price increase for gas from Russia, a rise Ukraine says is excessive but which Moscow insists it merely reflects the global market.

By cutting the supply Russia has "launched a scenario aimed at destabilizing the Ukraine economy," the foreign ministry said in comments posted on its website.

Kiev is seeking fresh talks with Moscow to resolve the energy crisis caused by Russia's move.

"I will call on Vladimir Putin ... for Gazprom to return to the negotiating table," Ukraine President Viktor Yushchenko told reporters on Sunday as his country of 48 million people braced for shortages.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, said it was "concerned" at the worsening crisis but "confident" the two neighboring states could come to an agreement.

Around a fifth of European gas imports come from Russia via Ukraine along, a single trunk pipeline that splits off after entering Ukraine into smaller branches to supply the Ukrainian network and western Europe.

The United States also expressed regret over the Russian decision, saying it created "insecurity" in the region's energy sector.

"As we have told both Russia and Ukraine, we support a move toward market pricing for energy but believe that such a change should be introduced over time rather than suddenly and unilaterally," State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack said in a statement.

Yushchenko insisted that Moscow's move would not affect Russian gas transit through Ukraine to European countries further downstream.

But Ukraine's state-owned energy firm Naftogaz said the cutoff threatened European gas supplies, and some nations said they were already feeling the pinch.

Austria's OMV energy company reported that supplies of Russian natural gas via Ukraine dropped by 18 percent.

Poland also immediately sought alternative supply routes for natural gas.

Slovakia's SPP gas company said it had also registered a drop in gas pressure but that consumers would be unaffected.

Gazprom spokesperson Sergei Kupriyanov said the supply in the gas export pipeline was being cut by 120 million cubic meters over a 24-hour period, equivalent to the daily export destined for Ukraine.

Later Sunday, Kupriyanov accused Ukraine of syphoning off gas destined for western European markets and said this was equivalent to "stealing from European customers."

Meanwhile, Ukraine braced for shortages from the gas cut, though officials said the country could rely initially on alternative import sources of natural gas, some domestic production and underground gas reserves.

Ukraine's emergency situations ministry set up a special crisis center and officials warned heating stations and industrial enterprises in southern and eastern parts of the country could face gas supply reductions. *AFP*

Gas supply cuts worry US, Europe

MOSCOW—THE UNITED States said Russia's halting of gas supplies to Ukraine raised questions about use of energy as a political weapon, and European countries voiced concern their supplies could be hit at the height of winter.

Russia, taking over the G8 chairmanship for the first time this month aiming to promote itself as a reliable energy source, cut its neighbor's gas supplies on Sunday.

Moscow said it had no choice but to act after Kiev refused to sign a new contract that would have jacked up prices fourfold, ending the preferential treatment of Soviet days.

The Kremlin describes the dispute as a purely commercial matter. But Kiev sees an attempt to undermine its pro-Western government and says cutting Ukrainian supplies will undermine deliveries passing through the same pipeline complex to Europe.

The move appeared to be affecting deliveries to central Europe by early evening, with both Hungary and Poland reporting reduced deliveries.

Washington stepped into the row, with the State Department saying it regretted Russia's move.

"Such an abrupt step creates insecurity in the energy sector in the region and raises serious questions about the use of energy to exert political pressure," State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack said in a statement.

"The US has encouraged a compromise solution, and we remain hopeful that a resolution will be reached between the two sides that provides energy security and predictability for all concerned."

Western Europe, where demand is near peak levels because of freezing weather, imports 25 percent of its gas from Russia, with most of that delivered by pipelines running across Ukraine.

The Russian state monopoly, Gazprom, said enough gas was still being piped via Ukraine to meet its commitments to other countries. If they were not getting all their gas, it said that meant Ukraine was tapping into it.

Hungary's gas wholesaler MOL said its Russian deliveries via Ukraine had fallen by more than 25 percent, forcing it to order big consumers to switch to oil where possible. Poland also said supplies were down by 14 percent.

Germany's largest gas supplier, E.ON-Ruhrgas, warned there could be problems for big wholesale customers if the dispute dragged on.

"If the reduction in supplies should prove to be especially large or last for a long time or the winter turns out to be especially cold, then we will hit the limits of our capacities," chief executive Burckhard Bergmann said on Sunday. *Reuters*

Syria ruling party expels whistle-blower

DAMASCUS—SYRIA'S RULING Baath party said Sunday it had expelled former Vice President Abdel Halim Khaddam, who has implicated the regime in the murder of Lebanese ex-Premier Rafiq Hariri.

The party, which has ruled Syria with an iron grip since 1963, described Khaddam's comments to Dubai-based satellite channel Al-Arabiya from his base in exile in Paris as a "slander which violates the principles of the nation."

Khaddam in the interview accused President Bashar al-Assad of threatening Hariri just months before his murder, dealing a fresh blow to the increasingly pressured Syrian regime.

"The national leadership has decided to throw Khaddam out of the party. It considers him a traitor. Khaddam has betrayed the party, the homeland and the (Arab) nation," the party leadership said in a statement carried by the official SANA news agency.

Members of Syria's loyalist parliament had earlier called for Khaddam to be tried for treason for his bombshell, the first time in the regime's history such a high-ranking official had turned whistle-blower.

MPs unanimously passed a motion calling for a trial during a regular session in which several MPs accused Khaddam of "treason" and "corruption" for his remarks.

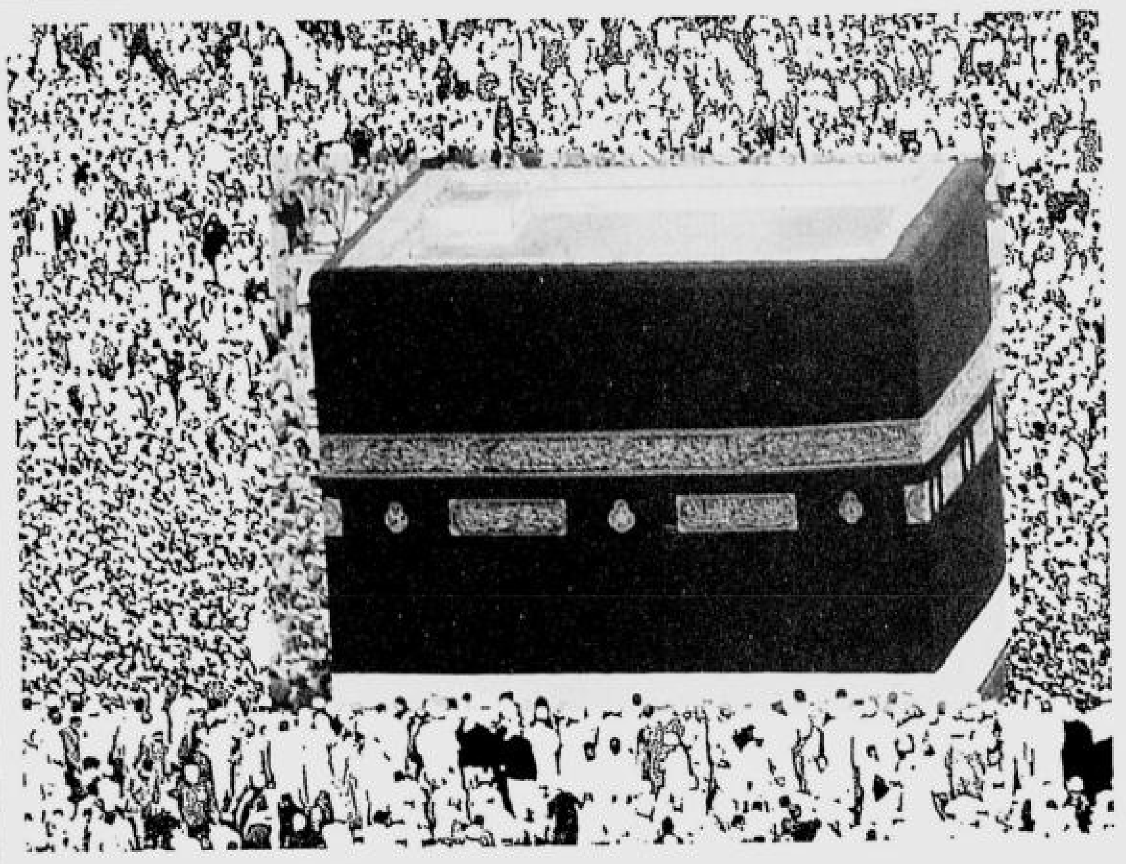
Khaddam, long the architect of Syria's military and political domination of neighboring Lebanon, made his explosive accusations in an interview broadcast by Al-Arabiya on Friday.

"I will destroy anyone who tries to hinder our decisions," Khaddam quoted Assad as telling Hariri during a meeting in Damascus.

Khaddam, speaking from Paris where he and his family now live, said the meeting took place a few months before the Feb. 14 assassination of Hariri in a Beirut bomb blast for which a UN probe has implicated Syrian intelligence.

"We must await the results of the investigation, but no Syrian security service could take such a decision unilaterally," Khaddam said.

In the same interview, he also accused Lebanon's pro-Damascus President Emile Lahoud of turning Assad against Hariri with a calculated series of attacks on his conduct as premier, a charge that Lahoud's office vigorously denied Sunday. *AFP*



ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE
A general view shows the holy Kaaba in the holy Saudi city of Mecca, Jan. 1. Muslim pilgrims circle around the Kaaba seven times to perform Tawaf as a part of Hajj. AFP

Bush defends domestic wiretapping

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS—President George W. Bush defended domestic eavesdropping by the National Security Agency on Sunday after a newspaper report about a Justice Department official's resistance to the program prompted new calls for a Senate inquiry.

The New York Times reported on Sunday that James Comey, a deputy to then-Attorney General John Ashcroft, was concerned about the legality of the NSA program and refused to extend it in 2004: White House aides then turned to Ashcroft while the attorney general was hospitalized for gallbladder surgery, the Times said.

"This is a limited program designed to prevent attacks on the United States of America," Bush said after visiting wounded troops at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio.

The NSA program "listens to a few numbers called from the outside of the United States and of known al-Qaida or affiliate people," he said.

"If somebody from al-Qaida is calling you, we'd like to know why," Bush said.

White House spokesperson Trent Duffy later said that while the president focused on calls being made from abroad, the eavesdropping program was also conducted on communications originating from inside the United States.

"We're at war," Bush said. "I've got to use the resources at my disposal, within the law, to protect the American people.

And that's what we're doing."

Democratic Sen. Charles Schumer of New York, a member of the Judiciary Committee, said he would ask committee Chair Sen. Arlen Specter, a Pennsylvania Republican, to seek testimony from Comey, Ashcroft, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card. *Reuters*

Car bombs, fuel riots usher in New Year in Iraq

BAGHDAD—FUEL RIOTS AND more than a dozen car bombs greeted the New Year in Iraq Sunday as relatives celebrated the release of one Cypriot, one Lebanese and five Sudanese hostages by their captors.

At least 40 people were wounded in the wave of bombings, which struck the tense northern oil city of Kirkuk and towns just north of the capital as well as Baghdad itself, security officials said.

Insurgents also shot dead a policeman in the main northern city of Mosul and wounded two more in a roadside bombing to its east.

An official of the Assyrian Democratic Movement was killed by gunmen in the south Baghdad neighborhood of Dura, the Christian political party said.

Gunmen also killed two worshippers and wounded five as they left the Sunni Hodhaifa mosque after evening prayers.

And further south, in the confessionally mixed town of Mahmudiyah, a Shiite cleric belonging to the radical movement of Moqtada Sadr was shot dead by suspected Sunni Arab insurgents.

The US military confirmed a soldier had been killed in a New Year's Eve mortar attack in south Baghdad, bringing its losses for 2005 to at least 844, according to the Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, a nonprofit organization that tracks the dead and wounded.

The death toll was very slightly down on the 848 recorded in 2004.

More than 30 soldiers from other coalition countries also died in Iraq in 2005.

Overall US losses since the 2003 invasion reached at least 2,175, according to an AFP count based on Pentagon figures.

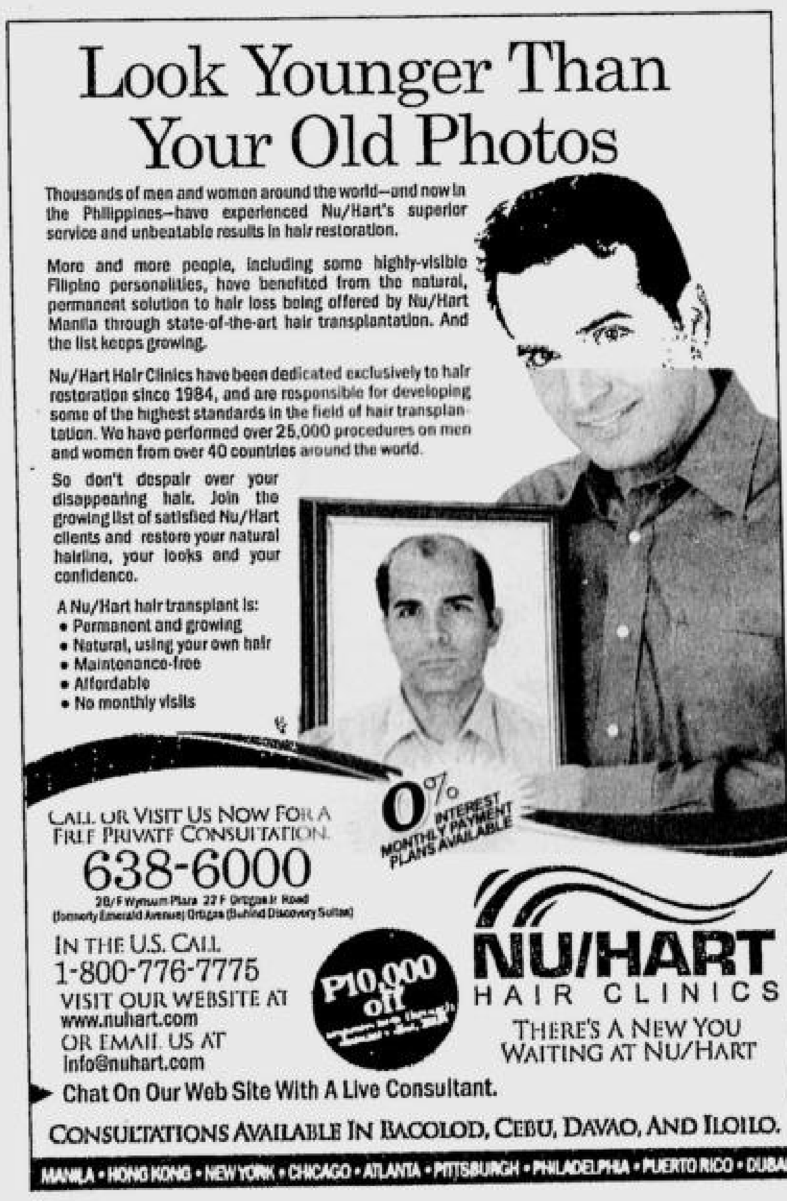
In Kirkuk, persistent fuel shortages in the oil city sparked rioting in which one person was killed and four wounded, prompting the authorities to impose an overnight curfew.

Protestors torched two petrol stations and a building housing offices of the state oil company as well as police vehicles, an AFP correspondent witnessed.

US helicopters hovered overhead but ground troops stationed not far away did not intervene.

Police commander Brig. Gen. Munis Isahak said the authorities had had no choice but to impose a 12-hour curfew in a bid to restore order.

"The citizens have a right to protest but these have turned violent and people have been hurt," he said. *AFP*



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Kerry keeps options open for 2008 race

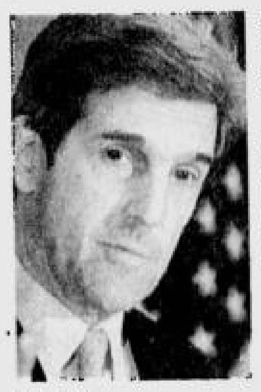
WASHINGTON—IT'S ALMOST AS IF SEN. John Kerry never stopped running for president.

He still jets across the country, raising millions of dollars and rallying Democrats. He still stalks the TV news show circuit, scolding President George W. Bush at every turn.

His campaign website boasts of an online army of 3 million supporters.

The Massachusetts Democrat, defeated by Bush in 2004, insists it is far too early to talk about the 2008 race, but some analysts assume he is already positioning himself for another shot at the White House.

"Obviously, Kerry has all but said he wants another crack at the thing," said Neal Thigpen, a political science professor at South Carolina's Francis Marion University. "He's going to make a second try."



KERRY

While most losing presidential nominees quickly fade into the political landscape, Kerry has worked hard at maintaining a high public profile.

"He's continuing the fight he began in 2004," said Kerry spokesperson David Wade. "He wants to make it very clear he's a fighter who is going to continue to fight for his agenda."

Borrowing a page from Republican Sen. John McCain's 2000 postelection playbook, Kerry has kept much of his presidential political organization intact. He has also used his fundraising prowess to aid Democrats across the country, collecting chits that could be called if he seeks the party's White House nomination. "He believes in his heart and soul that he came just a whisker away from being president," said Ronald Kaufman, a veteran Republican operative.

Traveling extensively since his 2004 loss, Kerry generated nearly $5.3 million for dozens of Democratic candidates, state parties and charitable causes, according to aides. He gave more than $200,000 to help Washington state Democrats prevail in Christine Gregoire's gubernatorial recount. *AP*

China's economy grew by 9.8% in 2005

BEIJING—CHINA'S ECONOMY GREW 9.8 percent in 2005, a vice minister was quoted as saying on Sunday, revising up an earlier estimate and again confounding forecasts that the country's racing output growth had begun to slow at last.

The higher growth rate, which may not be the final official figure, builds on the latest estimates of China's 2004 gross domestic product, which the statistics office hoisted by one sixth last month.

Fresh figures from the tax office also painted a picture of an economy beating expectations, with 2005 revenue growth almost double the budget estimate.

Ou Xinqian, a vice minister responsible for the National Development and Reform Commission, issued the new GDP growth figure ahead of the release of the statistics office's 2005 estimates due late this month.

"The commission's previous estimate for last year's economic growth was 9.4 percent," the official news agency Xinhua said, citing Ou. "This figure was adjusted according to the newly revised GDP (of) 2004." The commission, like other government agencies and private economists, had expected the economy to show a little moderation in 2005 after growing 9.5 percent in both 2003 and 2004.

CHINESE workers work at the compound of a residential apartment for foreigners in Beijing. AP

The authorities have been trying for more than two years to slow sectors reckoned to be in danger of overheating and risking an economic bust.

But while economists and investors worried about whether the authorities could pull off a soft landing, so far there has been little sign of any kind of landing at all.

It was unclear whether Ou's growth figure of 9.8 percent represented the official estimate of the government statistician or was merely a preliminary and independent estimate from the commission, China's top economic planning authority.

Separate government figures on Sunday showed tax collections from the booming economy had surged far beyond the budget forecast last year, rising 20 percent to a record 3,087 billion yuan ($382 billion).

The government had budgeted for a rise of just 11 percent to 2.93 trillion yuan, leaving a 2005 deficit of 300 billion yuan. *Reuters*

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Man questioned over deadly Indon blast

PALU, INDONESIA—INDONESIAN police said Sunday they were questioning a man about a New Year's Eve market bombing which killed seven people, in the latest attack by suspected Islamic militants on Christians in Central Sulawesi province.

"Acting on information from witnesses, we are questioning this man. However we have yet to declare him a suspect," provincial police spokesperson Rais Adam told AFP by telephone.

Local news reports said the man was seen in the market the night before Saturday morning's bombing at a market stall which sold pork in the religiously divided provincial capital of Palu.

"Based on evidence and information from witnesses, we have a reason to suspect that he is linked to the bombing," provincial police chief Brigadier General Oegroseno was quoted as saying by the Detikcom news website.

Police said the man had asked questions of people in the area a day before the bombing.

Rais said seven people died in the bombing, revising an earlier toll of eight.

At least 54 mostly Christian shoppers who had thronged the stall to buy pork, which is forbidden for Muslims, were injured. An unexploded bomb was found near the scene.

Security in the city was tightened after the bombing.

Police and soldiers carrying rifles patrolled the streets as national police chief General Sutanto and intelligence chief Syamsir Siregar inspected the blast site.

Security minister Widodo Adisucipto said Saturday that the attack was "related to terror networks which have so far been active in Indonesia." But police said it did not bear the hallmarks of fugitive Malaysian militant Noordin Mohammad Top and his group, which normally targets foreigners.

Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim-populated nation but Christians and Muslims live in roughly equal numbers in parts of Sulawesi and in the Malukus.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono condemned the attack and immediately ordered an investigation. *AFP*

Italian hostages in Yemen refuse release

SANAA—THREE ITALIAN WOMEN TAKEN hostage by Yemeni tribesmen on Sunday refused to be released, instead insisting on returning to their two male companions who were still held captive, local government sources said.

The kidnapping of the five tourists occurred just one day after a German family of five, including a retired top diplomat, were freed and was the fourth abduction of foreigners in the country within the space of three months.

"We have received a report of the kidnapping of five Italians ... in Sirwa in the region of Marib," 170 km east of Sanaa, a security official told AFP, requesting anonymity.

A local government official said that three females were released shortly after and handed over to the local government in Marib, while the two men remained captive.

He said that negotiations including tribal chiefs and local officials had started to secure the release of the remaining captives.

But the freed women refused to be released without their companions and demanded to rejoin the other two in captivity, a local government source said.

"After they (the three women) were handed over to the local government, they refused the initiative to release them and insisted to remain with the other two hostages," the source told AFP.

"They demanded to return (to the hideout) after arriving in the office of the local government," he added, saying that the trio had now rejoined their companions.

Italy's foreign ministry confirmed the kidnapping of Italian citizens in Yemen, saying it knew their identities but without giving further details.

A later statement said the ministry could not confirm the release of the three women.

A tribal source told AFP that the captors belong to the Al al-Zayidi clan, which belongs to the Jahem tribe, and that they are demanding the release of eight members of their clan imprisoned for a tribal vendetta. *AFP*

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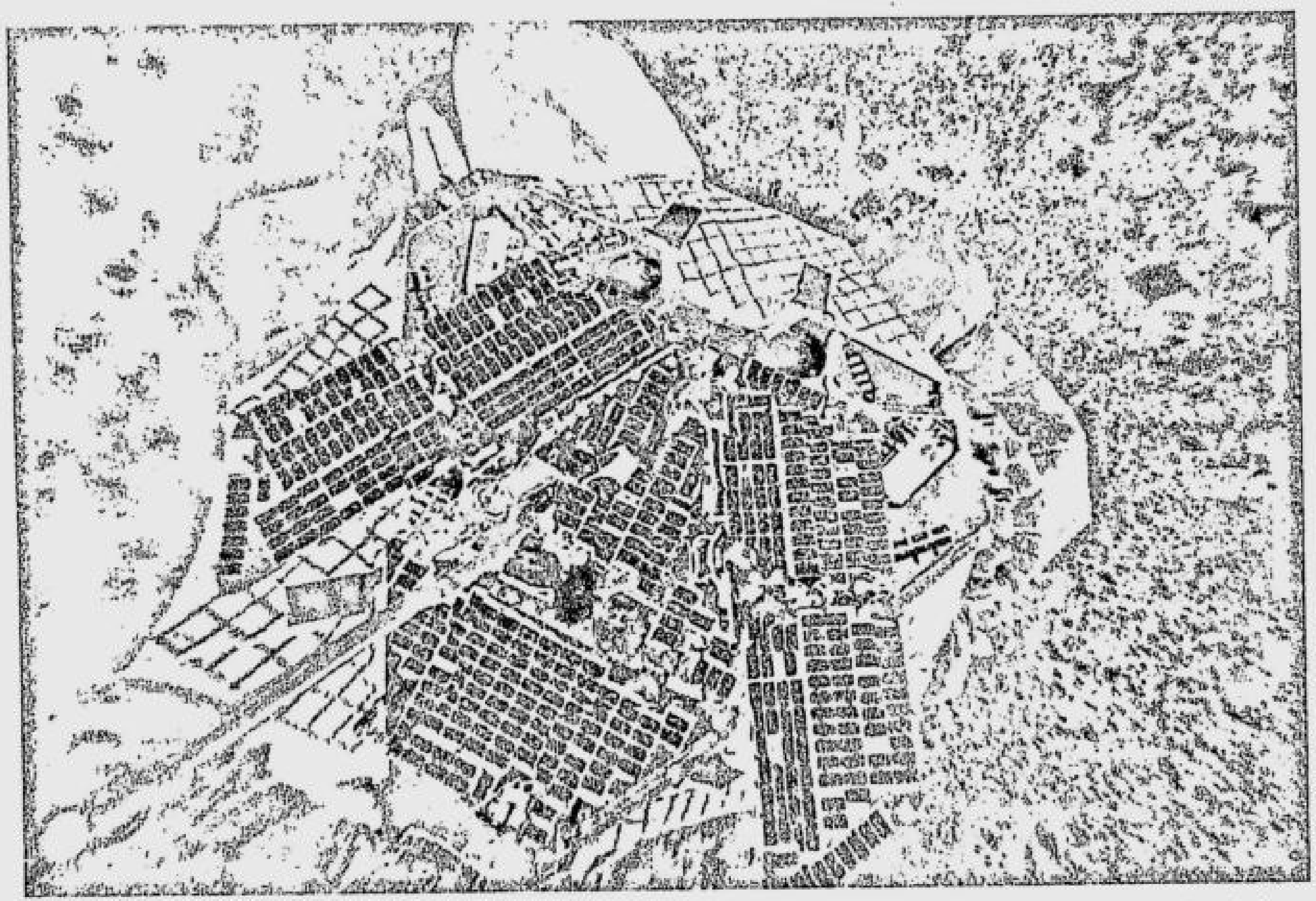

THIS mosaic file image taken by the navigation camera on the Mars Exploration rover Spirit shows an overhead view of the rover on the surface of Mars after its successful landing on Jan. 3, 2004. AP

2 YEARS AFTER

Two Mars rovers still exploring the Red Planet

LOS ANGELES—THE WARRANTY expired long ago on Nasa's twin robots motoring around Mars.

In two years, they have traveled a total of 11 km. Not impressed? Try keeping your car running in a climate where the average temperature is 67 below zero and where dust devils can reach 161 kph.

These two golf cart-sized vehicles were only expected to last three months.

"These rovers are living on borrowed time. We're so past warranty on them," says Steven Squyres of Cornell University, the Mars mission's principal researcher. "You try to push them hard every day because we're living day to day."

The rover Spirit landed on Mars on Jan. 3, 2004, and Opportunity followed on Jan. 24. Since then, they've set all sorts of records and succeeded in the mission's main assignment: finding geologic evidence that water once flowed on Mars.

Part of the reason for their long survival is pure luck. Their lives were extended several times by dust devils that blew away dust that covered their solar panels, restoring their ability to generate electricity.

Like most Earth-bound vehicles, these identical robots have their own personalities.

The overachieving Opportunity dazzled scientists from the start. It eclipsed its twin by making the mission's first profound discovery—evidence of water at or near the surface eons ago that could have implications for life.

The rock-climbing Spirit went down in the history books by becoming the first robot to scale an extraterrestrial hill. Last summer, it completed a daredevil climb to the summit of Husband Hill—as tall as the Statue of Liberty—despite fears that it might not survive the weather.

The rovers haven't been all get-up and go—technical hiccups have at times limited their activity, even from the start. At one point, Spirit had a balky front wheel, but engineers overcame the problem by driving it in reverse. Last spring, Opportunity got stuck hub-deep in sand while trying to crest a foot-high dune, and was freed after weeks of effort by the Earth-bound engineers.

The six-wheeled travelers, managed by Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, also are showing signs of aging. In November, a motor on Opportunity's robotic arm stalled and the arm failed to extend while it was surveying a rock outcrop. The engineers fixed that problem after two weeks.

This mission is the first time any probe has extensively rolled across Mars, whose rocky landscape is a dangerous place for man-made objects to settle and roam. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Israeli jets hit Fatah building

GAZA—Israeli aircraft fired a missile on Monday into a building in the southern Gaza Strip that is often used by members of the Fatah movement of President Mahmoud Abbas, residents said. The Israeli army said that it had "targeted a building used by the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades terror organization." The Brigades are part of Fatah. There were no immediate reports of casualties. *Reuters*

Another Indon dies of suspected bird flu

JAKARTA—An Indonesian man suffering symptoms of bird flu died Monday, as tests on another man suspected of being the country's 12th fatality from the virus showed he was not infected, health officials said. A 39-year-old man died after being treated for a day at Jakarta's Sulianti Saroso hospital, Indonesia's main bird flu treatment center, hospital spokesperson Ilham Patu said. Tests were being carried out to determine if he died of bird flu, he said. If confirmed, the man would be Indonesia's 12th fatality from the H5N1 virus. *AFP*

Yemen landslide kills 54

SANAA—The death toll from a landslide that devastated a Yemeni village has risen to 54, the state news agency said Sunday, as hopes dimmed for finding alive dozens of missing people. More than 72 hours after the landslide hit the small village of Al-Dhafeer on a rocky hillside west of the capital Sanaa on Thursday, eight survivors have been recovered from the rubble but 34 people remain missing. "Rescuers are still trying to find survivors among the 34 people reported missing and who are believed to still be under the rubble ... even if the chance of finding them alive is diminishing," the official Saba news agency said. *AFP*

Boy tested for bird flu dies in Turkey

ANKARA—A child being tested for possible avian influenza died in a Turkish hospital on Sunday, but doctors said there was no evidence he had fallen victim to the deadly disease which has killed more than 70 people in Asia. Five other people from the same region of eastern Turkey, four of them children, are undergoing tests in Van hospital near the Iranian border after exhibiting flu symptoms and failing to react to antibiotics. "Mehmet Ali Kocyigit, 14, died despite all our efforts to save him," the head doctor at the Van hospital, Huseyin Avni Sahin, told NTV commercial television, adding that the cause of his death was not yet known. *Reuters*

Palestinian militants kidnap Italian

GAZA CITY—Palestinian militants added to the turmoil in the Gaza Strip Sunday by kidnapping an Italian peace activist. Alessandro Bernardini, an Italian peace activist, was briefly kidnapped on Sunday in the southern border city of Khan Yunis. Bernardini had been part of a group of around 20 Italians on a mission designed to show solidarity with the Palestinian people. But shortly arriving in the city of Khan Yunis, he found himself being bundled into a vehicle by masked gunmen who promptly sped him away. *AFP*

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readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph
Tel. No. 897-8808, Loc. 342; Cell Phone No. 0917-805-7412

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A better year

EDITORIAL

THE NATION WENT THROUGH A POLITICALLY troubled, economically depressed 2005, but it seems that things will be looking up this year. We've seen some encouraging signs weeks before the end of last year:

The peso ended the year with a bang, rising to a two-and-a-half year high of 53.03 against the dollar. It was boosted by increased remittances from overseas Filipino workers and market optimism created by the government's improving fiscal position. BSP Governor Amando Tetangco said that the peso was the world's best performing currency in 2005. It could hit 52 to the dollar this year, the BSP said.

Remittances from overseas Filipino workers were seen as hitting an all-time high of $12.3 billion. Of this, about 87 percent or $10.7 billion was expected to come in through the banking system. The increased use of formal banking channels for the remittances could help develop better saving habits among the OFWs and result in a more productive use of the dollars earned by them.

Overseas workers' remittances are expected to remain at about the same level this year, unless some big, disruptive event occurs in the Middle East or other parts of the world where many Filipinos are working.

Exporters are selling their dollars, importers are not hedging and foreign investors are buying Philippine stocks and bonds. The spread on the country's bonds has been narrowing, and an upgrade in the country's credit rating is predicted.

Government officials said that as a result of the higher tax collection, the government would be able to wipe out its budget deficit as early as 2008 instead of 2010 as previously projected.

Consumers and businessmen can look forward to a good year as oil prices are expected to stay steady or even go down this year, Raul Concepcion, chair of the Consumer and Oil Price Watch, said. This is due to the plans of the United States and other big oil users to aggressively tap alternative energy sources, Russia's move to refine more oil to meet global demand and the expected resolution of political issues in Iraq, enabling it to produce more oil.

Last year the weather was relatively benign. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said 2005 was relatively less destructive insofar as tropical cyclones were concerned. We can only hope that similar good weather will prevail this year so that agriculture could enjoy a bountiful harvest and so that the nation would suffer minimal human casualties and minimal destruction to public and private property.

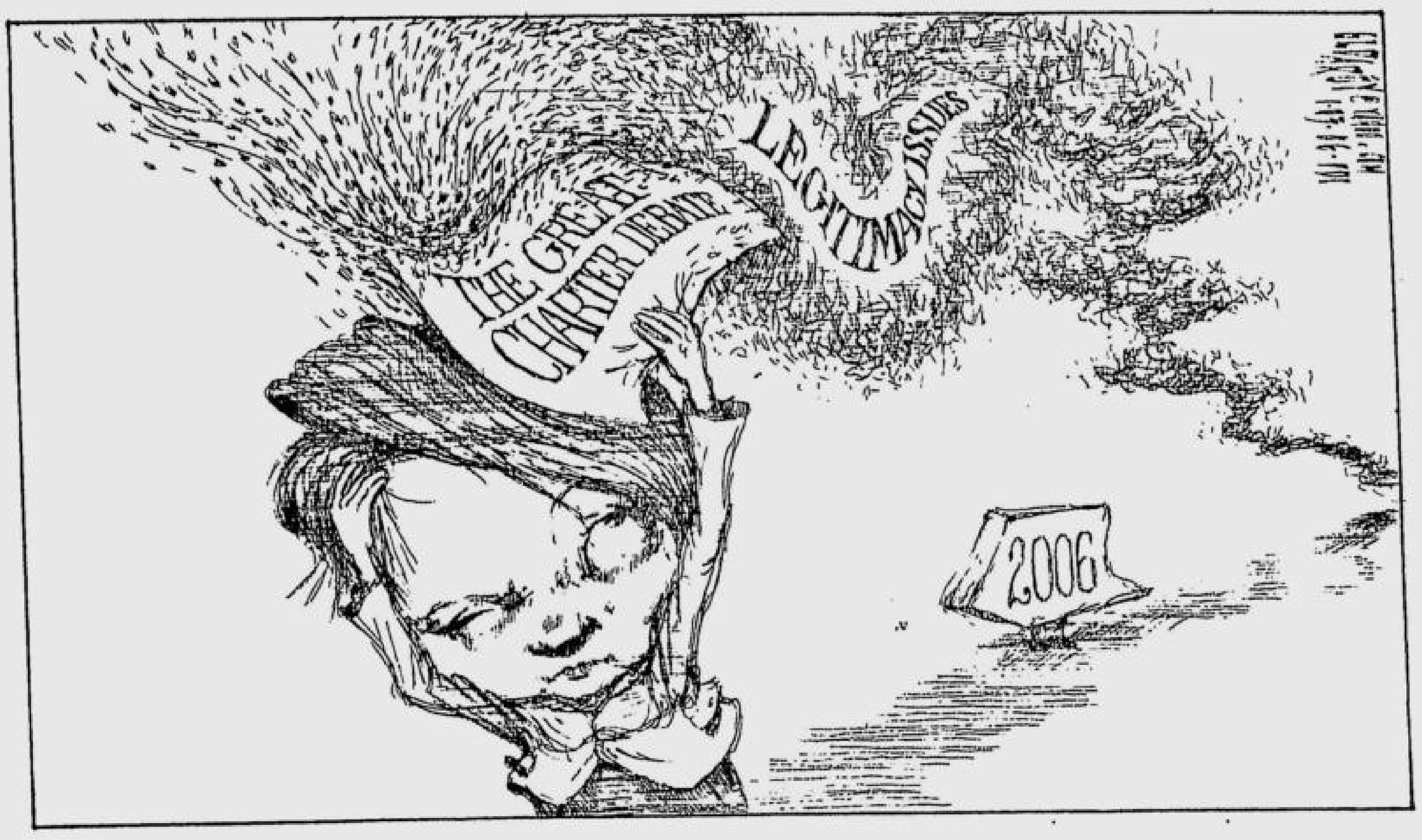
Toward the end of last year, spokesperson Luis Jalandoni of the National Democratic Front said the prospects for the resumption of peace talks between the government and the NDF were as bleak as they were after the talks were suspended six months ago. In the South, the Mindanao People's Caucus lambasted Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan, Southern Command chief, for accusing the Moro Islamic Liberation Front of rebuilding its base and recruiting new members. As of now, it appears that the settlement of the two conflicts is still an elusive goal.

On the political front, President Macapagal-Arroyo survived her worst political crisis last year but the question about the legitimacy of her presidency has not been resolved. The opposition can be expected to mount a new impeachment move soon after the regular session of Congress opens in July. The renewed political turmoil can be expected to have some effect again on the economy.

Whatever happens this year, the Filipinos' hopefulness, optimism and resilience can be expected to see them through hard and troubled times. A recent survey of the Social Weather Stations showed that 85 percent of Filipinos are looking forward this year with hope rather than fear.

Despite their poverty and wretched condition in life, most Filipinos remain an eternally happy, contented people. In the World Values Survey published by the University of Michigan in November 2004, the Philippines ranked high among 82 countries in terms of feelings of "subjective well-being" which combined its happiness and "life-satisfaction" scores.

The Filipinos' optimism and resilience helped them survive the darkest days of the Japanese occupation, the repression and rapacity of the Marcos dictatorship and the effects of natural and manmade disasters in the past 100 years. They can be expected to survive whatever catastrophes, setbacks and misfortunes fate will throw their way this year.



Zacchaeus resolutions

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, PRESIDENT GLORIA Macapagal-Arroyo renewed her 2005 resolution to leash her well-known temper. Even when provoked? That happens, we're told, from dawn to midnight within that snake pit dubbed Malacañang.

But "can one make resolutions when over 40?" Andre Gide wondered. "I live according to 20-year-old habits."

Isn't that the problem? An over-40 (oh, all right, 58) year old President habitually refuses to go ballistic at piranhas about her, from Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to Camilo Sabio, Commission on Good Government chair.

Sabio is no Haydee Yorac, his predecessor in PCGG. In every job Yorac took on—human rights lawyer, professor, peace negotiator, poll commissioner—she embodied Juvenal's axiom that "the sole nobility is integrity." Thus, she won the Magsaysay Award. A grateful nation interred her at Libingan Ng Mga Bayani.

Led by Yorac, the PCGG won a Supreme Court decision that wrested $683 million stashed in Marcos shell foundations abroad. The loot went to a fund-strapped national treasury.

The Supreme Court, under Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., shattered an 800-plus-motions-over-17-years gridlock clamped by Marcos cronies to squirrel the notorious coconut levy. Levies were "public funds," the Court ruled, not a private kitty, as businessman Eduardo Cojuangco and friends claimed. Yorac's PCGG actively sought that ruling.

Despite failing health, she shepherded levy cases in the Sandiganbayan, which ruled in May 2004 that 27 percent of San Miguel shares bought with levies were "owned by government, in trust for all coconut farmers." Justices Teresita Leonardo-de Castro, Diosdado Peralta and Francisco Villaruz directed that the shares be "reconveyed."

The court earlier forfeited 72.2 percent of United Coconut Planters Bank stocks to the government. "Coco levy-funded shares that cronies of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos acquired in SMC and UCPB" should be returned to the owners, i.e. farmers, the court ruled.

The coco levy is blood money. Period. Martial law edicts—Presidential Decree 276 to Executive Order 828—extorted that from helpless farmers. Indeed, "there's much law at the end of a bayonet." Ask Juan Ponce Enrile.

"Levies were taxes imposed...through abuse of state power," Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and 95 other religious and civic leaders wrote in a blunt 1996 open letter. "These are public funds owned by the Filipino people (but) they are claimed and controlled by Marcos cronies."

That blood money has now ballooned to over P130 billion. Men have killed for less—even for 30 pieces of silver.

Recall how Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition in Congress tried to impeach Davide who dared rule justly on the levy. By a 13-to-1 vote, the Court sledge-hammered Cojuangco's "Brat Pack" silly. An infuriated citizenry forced the House of Representatives to junk the rigged impeachment, but not before it shoved the country to the brink of a constitutional crisis.

"Congressmen made their way, after voting, to where the Cojuangco brothers were sitting ... to exchange high fives," an INQUIRER editorial noted: "All the while, (they're) biding their time."

Has that time come with Camilo Sabio? The PCGG chair now soothingly murmurs: "We're open to a compromise agreement on the levy."

This is an offer to take a dive. It's not the first. Last January, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye lofted a trial balloon. A fire sale of sequestered SMC stocks, he mused, would "strengthen our fiscal position." Stripped of the BS, that means a cash-strapped regime was itching to get blood money.

That'd be theft of powerless farmers' "blood," the second time around. To turn "deaf to the sighs of orphans and drink the tears of children demands a strong stomach."

But cast-iron guts is not what the country needs but values. Yorac displayed that in one of her last press conferences. The levies are "conclusively public funds," she said. "All properties acquired through it must be returned."

So, why is Sabio back-pedaling? Restitution is only another name for the Seventh Commandment: "Thou shall not steal." And that decree hasn't been repealed.

The tax collector Zacchaeus pledged before the Master, Luke writes, to return four-fold what he had swiped, we said in our INQUIRER and Cebu Daily News columns on May 18, 2004 titled, "The Zacchaeus precedent." Reparation goes the extra mile. "But making recompense here ends where the money bags aristocracy begins. The elite will tolerate anything—except hurting their wallets."

Would Sabio dangle that compromise proposal, if Malacañang hadn't winked? Were you born yesterday? Is PCCG now led by, as the Australian prime minister once said, "shivers in search of a spine"?

New Year resolutions against blowing one's top is fine. But annual navel-gazing means little, if justice is again mocked. "Next week, you can begin paving hell with (New Year) resolutions as usual," Mark Twain scoffed.

The President barely survived 2005. By adopting resolutions that hew closer to Zacchaeus' precedent, she could begin 2006 well. "Last year's words belong to last year's language," T.S. Eliot writes. " And next year's words avail another voice/And to make an end is to make a beginning."

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Streets

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

WHILE DRIVING THROUGH THE TRAFFIC-laden streets of Metro Manila during the last couple of weeks, I noticed something. (If heavy traffic serves any useful purpose, it is to compel you to notice things.) That is that next to the heroes, our streets are named after public officials. To this day, we have whole avenues still named after Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos. I will not name the other figures lest I insult their living relatives.

Some of the political figures do deserve to have streets named after them. Claro M. Recto clearly does. After Rizal, he was the one person who flailed at our mendicant attitude toward the colonial master and kept alive national pride. I wish though that the street named after him was a different one than what used to be Azcarraga. Azcarraga was named after Marcelo Azcarraga, the son of a bookseller in Escolta who later served in the Spanish government. I personally am not in favor of removing reminders of the past to give way to the present, mindful of what Jose Rizal said about what happens to people who do not know where they came from. This country being afflicted with Alzheimer's, it could do with abundant signposts from more distant history.

But what suddenly occurred to me at seeing the names of the streets was how few, if any, of the streets are named after writers, artists, scientists and intellectuals. I thought that was hugely indicative of the kind of judgments we had about the relative worth of people. The ones we give much importance to are public officials, not poets, novelists, painters, theater people, musicians. You'd almost think this country was resolutely against thought.

I wondered why we shouldn't name one of our main highways or avenues or boulevards after Nick Joaquin or N.V.M. Gonzalez or Franz Arcellana. I myself wouldn't mind seeing Quezon Avenue and Roxas Boulevard used for the purpose. There are streets and monuments enough named after Quezon and Roxas.

I wondered why we shouldn't name one of the major streets and thoroughfares and even landmarks after Antonio Molina and Levi Celerio or Santi Bose and Papo de Asis (my horrible mistake, quite incidentally, in saying no Filipino artist of note died in 2005: I can no longer rely completely on the 54-year-old hard disk in my brain!), or Rolando Tinio or Zenaida Amador. I wouldn't mind seeing all the streets named after the presidents, including the one who is so without having been voted into the position, turned into that, too.

I wondered why we shouldn't rename the BIR Road, which is an extension of Agham (Science) Road Raymundo Punongbayan Road. My horrible mistake as well to have forgotten him as one of the major figures who died last year.

Thankfully, Fernando Amorsolo has a street in Makati named after him. But for the most part, artists have been preserved in pavement, if not in stone, only in the small lanes in the Cultural Center Complex. Thankfully there, too, the names include many local writers and artists, which is as it should be. But that's another story. Elsewhere in the metropolis, with the exception of parts of San Juan and Makati, where many streets are named after flashpoints in the Philippine Revolutions of 1896 and 1899, it's the political figures that have stamped their mark on the physical landscape.

I remember again a Newsweek article the other year that compared the values different countries held as shown by the images candidates tried to project to win votes. In France, "presidentiables" (as they are also called, according to the article) depict themselves as writers, literary ability counting for much in that country. Some in fact, like Dominique de Villepin and Bertrand Delanoe, have made it to the bestseller list. In Germany, candidates aspiring to become prime ministers project themselves as musicians, since German voters put much premium on musical ability. Helmut Schmidt for one did an entire piano concert. In the United States, candidates hie off to bars, image-makers saying American voters prefer leaders they can share a beer with.

To go by the way we ignore writers and artists in the naming of streets, we wouldn't be too far off the American model. The names of streets reflect the culture of a people. Thank God Manila at least has Rizal, Bonifacio, Mabini and Del Pilar well represented. I will be kind and not say anything about the streets of Quezon City. But look at France whose streets are named preponderantly after writers, artists, scientists and philosophers—Descartes, Hugo, Flaubert, Zola, Curie and a host of others—and despair.

The names of streets reflect the culture of a people—or the lack of it.

* * *

My friend Lorna Tirol, the INQUIRER readers' advocate, writes:

"I'm writing in reaction to your column yesterday on Mei Magsino. While you were right to be outraged over a fellow journalist's terrible plight, I wish you...could have mentioned what the INQUIRER has been doing to help her. The column tended to give readers the impression that Mei, an INQUIRER correspondent, has been left to fend for herself. That is not the case at all. The INQUIRER has in fact been supporting her from the start of her problems with Governor Sanchez. Her lawyer, Atty. Pagdanganan, was provided by the INQUIRER. There was supposed to have been an arraignment on Dec. 7, but the lawyer received the notice only on Dec. 20.

"Would it be possible for you to include, in your next column, a short PS on Mei and the INQUIRER'S support for her? Just to set the record straight and in fairness to the INQUIRER."

With pleasure. Now if only the various national media organizations will pitch in to help one of its members who have decided to take her job seriously. What are you there for people, to hold parties?

Chino: My music is my prayer

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE RECOMMENDATION FOR NO ELECTIONS (No-El) in the transitory provisions of the draft constitution drawn up by the Consultative Commission has sent many folks into paroxyms of hysteria bordering on the comical. My feeling is that they're only recommendations—testing the waters, if you will—by majority of the ConCom, and could always be rejected by the people.

Some commissioners who voted for No-El have argued that postponing the 2007 elections would give the country a period of political calm and peace or a breathing spell, which would enable it to focus on the economy and other serious problems. Part of the bonus, it's argued, would be lessening graft and corruption since no elective public official would need to raise campaign funds while in office. But it's evident that majority of the people won't buy No-El; they always want to have a say on who will govern them (not to mention the fact that many of them derive benefits from the political exercises).

In shooting down No-El, the opposition has accused President Macapagal-Arroyo of orchestrating it so as to be able to stay in office until 2010. This accusation is hard to fathom, since GMA does not benefit from scrapping the 2007 elections because her term, unless she's impeached or ousted, ends in 2010.

So, let's forget No-El and focus the debates instead on the more substantive portions of the draft constitution. Above all, let's keep in mind that there are two steps in amending the Charter: deliberations by Congress convened as a constituent assembly, and submission of the provisions approved by the assembly to the people in a plebiscite. In this process, let's get our inputs in, for if we fail to do so, we won't have anyone to blame but ourselves.

* * *

Many years ago, my late Miami-based uncle, Barry Olivares, rode with us from Quezon City to Manila, with my husband at the wheel. He grew tense watching drivers zig-zag in and out of the lanes and later exclaimed that he could never drive here. That was several decades ago, and driving habits of Pinoys have since grown even worse. Which is why it's not surprising that the US Embassy in Manila would issue an advisory, not against terrorist attacks but on the dangers of driving in Manila. The advisory noted the "uniquely Filipino style of driving, which is often erratic and unpredictable." The advisory added: "Those with orderly driving habits may find it difficult to adjust to the chaos of Manila's streets. Caution is the golden rule... Lane markings and crosswalks are mere suggestions and stop signs might as well be in Braille. Of the few working stoplights, they are too long when obeyed and too dangerous when not." It also noted that buses stop in the middle of the streets, allowing passengers to exit into oncoming traffic and that drivers have the bad habit of changing lanes without adequate notice.

* * *

Some media personalities took offense at that driving advisory, pointing out that bad driving habits are universal. Sure, but our Pinoy drivers really take the cake. *Sobra talaga.* This frenzied Christmas season, traffic became horrible due to the lifting of color-coding, but it was also because the buses were loading and unloading anywhere, forcing other drivers to swerve. Over the years, the MMDA has gone to great lengths to correct the bad driving habits and ease the traffic, including putting yellow lanes for buses. But the problem is, the MMDA's efforts are mostly *ningas cogon.* Today, pandemonium reigns in Metro Manila's streets: people cross anywhere they want, and even tear down the wire barriers within spitting distance of the elevated pedestrian crossings. The MMDA itself has also failed to remove traffic lights in places where they are no longer needed because of the U-turn slots. This only adds to the confusion and the perception that traffic rules need not be obeyed.

Traffic and bad driving can be remedied with political will. MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando has made a lot of enemies, but he also has a lot of admirers because of his guts in enforcing the law. But lately he seems to have taken a long vacation. Paging Bayani.

* * *

Last Saturday, I wrote about Filipino child prodigy Joaquin "Chino" Gutierrez, 15, who recently returned from his studies in Munich to perform as violin soloist at the 75th birthday concert of Oscar Yatco with the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra. His father, Lamberto Gutierrez, called up to make a minor correction: the Stanford University "Education Program for Gifted Youth" that Chino enrolled in at the age of 10, while still a student at the Community of Learners, was Internet-based and not on online TV. He finished advanced Algebra in less than a year and so impressed were the Stanford officials, who waived the $5,000 enrollment fee, that they gave him a standing invitation to enter the university.

Blessed with prodigious gifts in math, language and music, Chino had to catch up on Latin upon arrival in Munich. His high school classmates had been studying the subject since Grade 5. But apart from his 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. high school classes, Chino takes violin lessons with renowned violin professor Dr. Jens Ellermann, who considers him his star pupil. He puts in about four to five hours of practice daily.

We were awed by this punishing schedule and asked him what he does to relax. Chino loves to take long walks in Munich's beautiful parks, surfing on the Internet and watching movies with his friends. Girls are already in the horizon, says the father, but there is no serious romance yet.

Chino never forgets he's Filipino and wears a tiny Philippine flag pin daily on his uniform. Above all, he's very grateful to the Lord for his talents, especially his music "which, after all, came from Him." Once he told his grand-aunt, Linda Sebastian, "My music is my prayer."

What's his advice to young people? "Dream big. Don't think small. Work hard and your dreams might come true."

My brother Manny

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

HE WAS THE FAMILY'S "AMBASSADOR" TO THE outside world. Our oldest brother Nono recalls that when the family first moved from Pangasinan to Manila, renting the lower level of the Saysons' house in Tondo, Manny, then about five, was the first to explore the rest of neighborhood, starting with the landlords' quarters on the upper floor.

Manny quickly earned the nickname "Tak," because he had the habit of walking through the Saysons' doorway every morning and demanding "kuwarta'k," which meant "my money" or "give me money" in Pangasinan.

By the time the family moved to Cubao, Manny had broadened his reach. He was known all around the block and beyond, making friends among our neighbors, including the kids in the nearby squatter community. I remember one time, when he came home late for Sunday lunch, sweaty and smelling of the sun, Mama scolding Manny: "You're like a stray cat! We never know where to find you!"

And indeed, Manny had a natural affinity for strays. He would bring home sorry-looking kittens and pups, raising them back to health and gaining their devotion. He brought into our home a gaggle of friends who would become such loyal and constant companions that we soon took their presence for granted.

He was born with a "people-pleasing" gene, always the first among us nine siblings to open up to visitors, regaling them with amusing anecdotes and a repertoire of jokes that, however corny or how often we had heard them, were funny just in the telling.

* * *

FOR friends and family, Manny would do anything, being extremely generous with his time and ingenuity.

I remember when I was on a month-long fellowship at Johns Hopkins University, making a frantic phone call to my sister's home in Virginia because I had forgotten to bring my diabetes medications with me. It was Manny who made the nearly three-hour drive to Baltimore just to deliver the medicine. He drove up some weeks later to fetch me and drive me to New York so I could visit my in-laws.

By the time he had moved to the Washington, D.C. area, where he worked for many years as a driver for the Latvian Embassy, Manny had become so familiar with the environs that he would have given even professional tour guides stiff competition.

It was Manny who told us about the summer outdoor concerts in Wolftrap, which he frequented, although we finally made the trip only last year, for a concert of Johnny Mathis.

One memorable excursion he took me and my family on was a visit to the then just-opened Roosevelt Memorial on the banks of the Potomac, followed by a picnic on the riverside, with fast food chicken and chips. My sister Chona was horrified to learn that Manny had brought us to a KFC outlet (which I remember for the counter behind a sheet of bulletproof glass) in a "bad" part of D.C., but it was just like Manny with his quirky sense of humor to take us to witness even the seedy side of the capital.

Relatives itching for bargain buys in the weekend yard sales around the suburban Virginia area knew they could always count on Manny for chauffeuring services. Just as he always made himself available for emergency trips to the doctor or hospital, rides to the airport, soccer games and family occasions.

* * *

LATER in life, especially after his second marriage to the former Angela Fe Andres, Manny, a former seminarian, was reborn in the faith, becoming an active parish worker and a stalwart of the Legion of Mary.

About a year ago, Rob, the then-fiance of our niece Cesi, began asking Manny and our brother Father Boboy questions about the Catholic faith. Unknown to most of us, Manny and Father Boboy began talking in earnest to Rob, who was born a Baptist. When Rob moved to Montreal to be closer to Cesi, who was on her senior year at McGill University, he began taking formal lessons in their parish. For his baptism (and confirmation and first communion), Rob asked Manny to stand as his godfather, and Manny took the 12-hour train ride just for the rites, leaving the same evening so he could be back in time for work. Cesi and Rob were married some months later.

After he was diagnosed with stomach cancer last March and had to undergo an operation, we learned that his friends in the parish and the Legion of Mary had organized a prayer brigade for his survival and recovery. Though deeply touched, Chona and I weren't all that surprised, knowing how Manny with his capacity for making friends, had endeared himself to all those people.

* * *

IN ALL the time that he spent in the hospital and while undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatment, Manny's only wish was to see his son Rocky, who is staying here.

But there were problems obtaining a US visa for Rocky, and Chona tells us that the last time she saw Manny at the hospital, shortly before she was to leave for Manila to attend a wedding, his only request was to have Rocky's visa expedited.

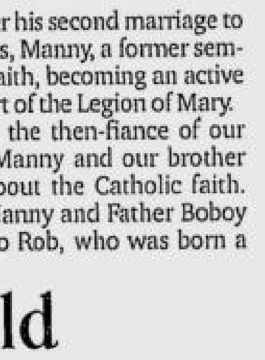
Rocky was able to talk with his dad one last time a few hours before Manny passed away, a conversation that was cut short because Manny was too weak to talk for long. Coincidentally, we were also holding a "family pow-wow" at the time, planning what we could do to grant Manny's last wish, plans that would soon prove inutile. In an e-mail message, his daughter Michelle, who was at his bedside, writes: "Dad suffered for a year fighting to stay alive and I can sleep through the night knowing God is with him. No more pain and suffering. I spent the whole day with him in the hospital the day before he passed away and he told me that God kissed his forehead."

We celebrate Manny's life and memory with a Mass and Memorial Service tomorrow, Wednesday, Jan. 4, at 7 p.m. at the Lower Chapel of Christ the King Parish in Greenmeadows. Thank you for your prayers and kind thoughts.

Gold

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper



DR. B. LEGARDA E-MAILED TO SAY THAT AN *encomienda* was the right to collect taxes on a piece of land. He added: "Forgot to add that an *encomienda* was not permanent but had a limited duration, say, one, two or three lifetimes—all the more reason for concluding that it was not ownership. Of course, the crown wanted to get back the sources of revenue! Supposedly it was given to those who took part in the conquest, but there were *encomenderos* with names like Liwag and Macapagal—see Cushner's 1970s book on Spain in the Philippines.

"*Encomiendas* were also given to charitable institutions like San Juan de Dios Hospital; I remember seeing in the archives many years ago *encomienda* records for that hospital dating from as late as the 18th century."

I bring this up because if you've been following developments lately, you'd know from the papers that there's a resurgence of interest in gold. There was a boom in that metal in the 1930s (I have an old stock certificate of my dad's some place of a gold company called Anaconda based in Shanghai), and today, there are speculations that gold may reach $800 an ounce, nearly double its present price. The Philippines has always been a gold-producing country, and even before the Spaniards came, it was trading gold with the Chinese in exchange for pottery, porcelain, silks and other commodities. Gold was apparently the main object of the Chinese traders.

Giovanni Gaetano, pilot of the San Juan from the ill-gated Villalobos expedition, in his description of Mindanao, wrote of "a very special gold, which is dug out of mines in the same land; they value it, and use it for exchange, and wear chains and jewelry made of it." Another member of the expedition, Garcia Alvarado, spoke of an old Filipino that he ransomed who informed them that there was a large town on the island of Abuyo where the Chinese who kept a house there for their merchandise would go every year to trade "gold and some slaves." In Cebu, he continued, there were still some Spaniards from Magellan's time and that the Chinese would go there to "buy gold and certain jewelry because that island has it." He said Butuan, near Zubu (Cebu), "is rich in gold" and junks from many places would go there to trade. North of Samar was an island he called Albay that had gold mines.

In Sarangani, the Villalobos crew also noted that a lot of gold was found. In the five accounts of this expedition, whenever Filipinos are mentioned, they are described as wearing gold earrings, bracelets, necklaces and even on their teeth. Filipinos apparently were as fond of gold jewelry and bangles as now (otherwise why would Virra Mall do such thriving business?), but the other favorite down the ages has been Chinese jars and plates which were considered, together with the gold, as part of their wealth.

By the time Legaspi's troops occupied Luzon and the rest of the archipelago, the country had been parceled out into *encomiendas* or trust territories. It must have been with gold in mind that some of the recipients chose the north eastern and eastern districts of Mindanao, aware of reports of the legendary gold. In 1573, Andres de Mirandaola reported to the king that "much gold is found on the island of Vendanao, in the districts of Butuan, Curigao and Parasao." (The name Parasao still exists today as a barrio in Caraga.)

Guido de Lavezares, later governor general after Legaspi, was one of those who had an *encomienda* along the Butuan River. The first Spaniards who settled in Cebu had *encomiendas* in Surigao and Parasao as well.

Two present-day towns in southern Surigao are Bislig and Linguig, names that sound similar to types of gold found even in Luzon. *Bizlin* was gold worth a tael (1.5 ounces) and *linguinin* was worth P4. Filipinos used these for trade and barter, although in reports dating to the 1600s, these were spelled as "bixlin" and "linguin."

Today we hear of the placer mines. Here is an account from the Augustinian Memoranda 1580 about a small island near Placer: "The chief mines ... are ... on the island that the Spaniards call Vermeja, about two leagues from Curigao, where, according to a report, ... the greatest wealth of all" could be found.

There were many gold placers in many small islets near Siargao, according to Miguel de Loarca (1582). Francisco Colins, in his "Labor Evangelico," states that the best known place for gold was Butuan. Datu Silongan told his father to send some samples to the captain general in Manila. Two bamboo tubes "of one-half fathom length" and as thick as a leg were filled with gold dust. The other was filled with "gold in the form of necklaces made of different kinds of rings linked together."

Thirty years later, Fernando de Silva, an *encomendero*, said that all the natives had to do to pay their tribute for the year was work for a week "because there was so much gold in the river."

Granted that this was all a long time ago, but the renewed interest in the metal today confirms that there is still gold in "dem dar hills." So if anyone tells you that this is a poor country, don't believe him. It's only the people who are poor basically because they have been ill-served ("Keep them poor and keep them ignorant," as one politician allegedly said), but this does not have to be the case.

* * *

Comments at bambiharper@yahoo.com

Chickenjoy dream

YOUNG BLOOD

Teresa Patricia B. Bernal

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

IT WAS ALREADY PAST 4 IN THE AFTERNOON AND I hadn't eaten my lunch yet. I had gone to the gym and proceeded to school to check my grades. I had dropped by my old office to check on my friends but I was told they were attending a meeting, so I decided to go home.

Alighting from the Baclaran station of the LRT, I saw a Jollibee store and decided to eat. I had another 1½-hour ride before I would reach home and I was feeling hungry. I went into the store, gave my order and sat at the nearest table available and stretched my legs. I had been on the road for almost two hours going from Alabang to La Salle, and after half an hour, I caught the train on my way back home. I was pooped, and the last meal I had was nothing more than a bowl of oatmeal.

When my food came, a small grimy boy about four years of age approached my table, begging for alms. I instinctively shooed him away, and started to eat while he went on to the next table, asking for loose change from the other patrons.

But though I was tired and really hungry, I lost some of my appetite soon after taking a few bites. I began to search for the boy inside the store, hoping he was still around. I saw him being shooed by other people, and I wished he would pass by my table again so I could make it up to him.

When he moved within earshot, I called out to him. I asked him if he had already eaten, which was really a stupid question because he looked like he hadn't had a decent meal for days.

I asked him if he wanted the same stuff as what I was eating. He said he wanted a toy. But the "kiddie meal" only included an educational VCD, which I was sure he wouldn't have any use for. I decided to buy him the "chickenjoy and spaghetti meal" instead. I told him to watch my food while I went back to the counter to order his meal.

When I turned around to ask him what drink he would like, he had this wide smile on his face that seemed to say, "I can't believe I have hit a jackpot with this crazy woman who was willing to buy me some chickenjoy." And the thought made me smile, too.

I went back to my seat and asked him to wait for his food. I asked for his name but he just mumbled something. I was shocked to know that he lived in Apelo, a good 10 minutes by car, and a good half-hour on foot. How on earth did he get here and who was he with? It was raining and the streets were muddy.

He again told me he was wishing for a toy, but I explained there was none at Jollibee. "*Sana nag-McDo na lang tayo, may laruan dun,*" he said, obviously disappointed.

"*Pasaway ka talaga. Namili ka pa!* (You are really naughty and very picky too,)" I chided him gently. But I couldn't really blame him; he was probably as surprised as I was that I had bought him a meal.

He asked for P20, saying his mother had instructed him to buy a kilo of rice if he would have enough money. I was starting to feel like he was taking advantage of my kindness. But when I asked him how many siblings he had and he showed me seven fingers, and said they were five in the family. I gave him some coins anyway.

I asked him to read the number written on the plastic marker, and he told me it was 13. When I said it was 2, he snickered. I told him to count the coins in his hand, and he said there were five. But there was more.

I thought how sad it was that this boy could not count and recognize numbers while my 5-year-old niece could already count to 100. I wondered what his future would be, and I thought it was most likely that he would grow up and try to earn a living by thieving and end up in jail. He knew very little more than begging, roaming the streets without slippers, and shouting profanities at his playmates. And his mother had imposed upon him the responsibility of bringing home some rice that he could share with his siblings.

When his food came securely taped, I told him to share it with his mom when he got home. Again, he gave me such a big smile that it showed most of his stained little baby teeth. Then he left, without a word.

I was filled with one of the best feelings I had in a very long time, pleased with what I had done and happier still to see his big, grateful smile.

I had lost my appetite completely, but the thought of the long ride home prompted me to finish my meal. As I left the store, I saw him at the foot of the stairs, clutching the plastic bags. When he saw me, he again flashed his big smile and I noticed that spaghetti sauce was all over his face. I waved at him to say goodbye and walked to the jeepney stop. He might not have known how to say thank you, but that smile said everything for me. I was grinning from ear to ear all the way home.

I've been told that Thursday is a lucky day for Pisceans. My horoscope says so, and the day has been holding some little surprises for me for years now. But that particularly Thursday, I had gotten out of bed feeling miserable and convinced that nothing could get me out of that mood. But what do you know? The surprise was of my own doing, and ironically, I ended up surprised, too.

I must admit that I'm a snob. I don't want to have anything to do with strangers, and I hate filthy beggars. I seldom commute and I don't care much for fast food. So who would have thought that I would be doing all those things in one day and come out of it happy lot? The kid had his Chickenjoy dream fulfilled, but that experience could very well be the start of my pursuit for self-realization.

Teresa Patricia B. Bernal, 25, is doing her master's in early childhood education at De La Salle University.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

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For whose benefit is Charter-change

A CREATURE OF GLORIA MACAPAGAL-Arroyo, the Consultative Commission (ConCom) has lived up to the expectations of its creator. First, it recommended a bribery-driven formula to keep GMA in power until 2010. Second, it proposed that the exploitation of natural resources and the operation of public utilities, reserved by all Philippine constitutions (past and present) as the exclusive birthright of Filipinos, be opened to foreigners.

Apparently, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales did not have to enlist Venable's services to raise lobby money for the ConCom. On its own, it seemed the ConCom was willing to act in the interest of transnational corporations, as it actually did. Or did Venable's long arm reach the ConCom, thus deservedly earning Gonzales' P50-million down payment?

The truth is that the Constitution has nothing to do with our people's dismal condition. The culprit is the World Bank-International Monetary Fund debt conditions, which constitute a superstructure of policies and programs over and above the Constitution. For example, the EVAT law is a mandate of the WB-IMF, not of the Constitution. The purpose of the EVAT is to improve our country's capacity to service our debts, not to raise funds for infrastructure development and social services. When Malacañang says that the EVAT is for the benefit of the people, not only does it pick the people's pocket to service the regime's debts, it also insults the people's intelligence.

The principal sponsors of Charter change—GMA, Speaker Jose de Venecia, and former President Fidel V. Ramos—are not out to revise the Constitution for the benefit of the people; they are out to divert the people's attention from the fact that the treacherous Arroyo-De Venecia-Ramos triumvirate has been and still is in the service of the WB-IMF.

—Amado Gat Inciong,
Inciong and Associates,
Unit 301 Union Square Condominium,
145 15th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City

An international syndrome

THIS IS A DEFENSE OF RANDY DAVID'S Nov. 13 column, titled "The return of the repressed," although this may not be as comprehensive and effective as the one he can come up with. Cliff Michelena, obviously a conservative American citizen, refuted the view of the respected educator by citing an incident in New York wherein a Filipino committed a heinous crime by raping and killing his Puerto Rican ex-girlfriend. He then proceeded to emphasize that "there was no public outcry" against the crime, unlike in the Philippines where the public and the media overreacted to the rape of a Filipina by US marines. (PDI, 12/05/05)

I would like to point out to Michelena that "there was no public-outcry" in the United States because the accused Filipino was not a part of a Philippine military or diplomatic mission to the United States. If he were a Filipino serviceman or diplomat, there certainly would have been a different reaction.

Michelena should take note that, similarly, crimes committed in the Philippines by private American nationals have not drawn as much controversy as the recent Subic rape has. Furthermore, the Philippines never colonized the United States. Therefore, atrocities committed by Filipinos in that country would not be as easily viewed as an assault on that nation's dignity and integrity.

But when a soldier of a former colonizer commits such acts against a citizen of its former colony in the latter's territory at that, it can only be seen as arrogance and add insult to injury. Understandably, it could only hurt the former colony's pride and dignity. If this reaction is "American phobia" according to Michelena, I'm afraid that it is already an international syndrome.

—DANIEL ALOC,
Adamson University,
4th year A.B. Political Science

High court's imperilled credibility

BECAUSE OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL crisis, President Macapagal-Arroyo should have intervened less in the appointment of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court by following the seniority rule. After all, she is a party to many cases pending before the Court. The person who appointed Virgilio Garcillano to the Commission on Election despite his record should have waived her constitutional prerogative and followed tradition.

The Counsels for the Defense of Liberties (CODAL) believes that the seniority rule must be followed, unless there are compelling reason to deviate from it; otherwise, the Court's and the chief justice's independence and integrity will be imperiled. Bypassing Justice Reynato Puno for no apparent reason except, as Malacañang admitted, to give Justice Artemio Panganiban a chance to be Chief Justice does not constitute compelling reasons.

The problem with not following seniority rule is that it makes the Chief Justice owe the appointing president a favor.

Due to current crisis, Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban has to inhibit himself from controversial cases involving Ms Arroyo (e.g., EO 464, BP 880 and the CPR, the motion for reconsideration on the impeachment case, the Garcillano petition for "declaratory relief," and EO 420 on the ID system) if only to help assure people of the integrity of any decision on these issues. The list will include possible petitions related to the amendment of the Constitution—a subject that goes into Ms Arroyo's term of office, and other controversial issues that will arise from the current political crisis. Any high court decision favoring Ms Arroyo on these issues, whether legally sound or not, will always lack credibility and respect. Chief Justice Panganiban may well become the most "inhibited" Chief Justice in the history of the Supreme Court.

In a crisis where both the executive and the legislative branches of government are losing credibility, imperiling the Supreme Court's integrity and independence only exacerbates. GMA's recent major decisions and actions were viewed as mainly aimed at ensuring her political survival. It is not surprising if the public perceives her appointment of Chief Justice Panganiban as a part of her scheme to stay in power.

—NERI JAVIER COLMENARES,
spokesperson,
Counsels for the Defense of Liberties,
4th F KALIA Bldg., 7836 Makati Ave. cor.
Valdez St., Makati City,

THE QUIAPO Church all lit up for the Christmas season.

Quiapo Church, amusement park

THE INQUIRER FEATURED THE QUIAPO Church on the front page of its Dec. 17 issue. But has anyone noticed the blatant changes that have been done on the church lately? They have distressed me so much. The statues outside the church, which used to be white in conformity with the rather conservative color scheme of the façade, are being painted with other colors. (Just imagine coloring the statues in Bernini's famous colonnade at St. Peter's!)

This goes without mentioning the other changes that have been done inside, without taking into account the architectural and aesthetic composition of the building. It may not be long before this church, an important landmark of our culture and faith, will look like a veritable amusement park.

While I appreciate the sincere and well-meaning efforts to renovate and embellish the church, I do believe these recent projects need reconsideration and, perhaps, repair.

—LEO R. OCAMPO,
325 Loreto St., Sampaloc, Manila

Wanted: bright, novel ideas

I AM SICK AND TIRED OF HEARING Senators Franklin Drilon, Francis Pangilinan, Rodolfo Biazon, Aquilino Pimentel and Archbishop Oscar Cruz say the country will get worse under President Macapagal-Arroyo. Could they please let the nation know of their clear, doable plans to cure the nation of all its ills, aside from ousting a sitting president? Something tangible, something immediate, something that will radically change our present condition—from an impoverished, graft-ridden nation to a prosperous country of upright and useful citizens? Many of us are waiting for some really bright, novel ideas from these good guys. I can hardly wait.

—NANCY ISLA,
412 12th St, Galveston, TX, USA

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Case vs Bro. Eddie not politically motivated

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE REPLY OF Bro. Eddie Villanueva and ZOE Broadcasting Network (ZOE) (PDI, 11/28/05) to the Oct. 8 column of Belinda Olivares-Cunanan.

Our client Benito Araneta filed his complaint for estafa against Bro. Eddie Villanueva before the Office of the City Prosecutor of Mandaluyong City on Oct. 11, 2004. Brother Eddie submitted his counter-affidavit on Dec. 21, 2004. On Jan. 10, 2005, Araneta filed his reply and, on Jan. 17, 2005, Brother Eddie filed his rejoinder after which the matter was submitted for the resolution of the city prosecutor. On the basis of those submissions, the prosecutor, in a resolution dated Feb. 17, 2005, ruled that there was probable cause to charge Brother Eddie with estafa.

These facts clearly belie Brother Eddie's claim that there was no judicious determination of facts prior to the issuance of the arrest warrant against him.

Contrary to Brother Eddie's claim, Araneta was not informed of the foiled deal with Velez of VTV Corp. during the negotiations between ZOE and Entertainment Network Limited (Enter-Net) in 2001.

Also, the professional services of Eric Domagas, former VTV president, were engaged only sometime in November 2001 upon the recommendation of Brother Eddie. He was never Araneta's adviser. Domagas, in his sworn statement as Brother Eddie's witness, clearly stated that he was informed and consulted by Brother Eddie about a Memorandum of Agreement and Joint Venture Agreement with Enter-Net and Araneta only after the agreements had already been entered into. It would not have been possible, therefore, for Domagas to confirm Araneta's prior knowledge of the alleged "foiled VTV deal."

Brother Eddie's claim that ZOE was "open to enter into a co[illegible] with Enter-Net" is further belied by two letters, dated June 17, 2003 and July 8, 2003, sent by ZOE's counsel to VTV. The letters demanded the execution and delivery of the necessary agreements and contracts under its Memorandum of Understanding (dated Feb. 28, 1999) with ZOE. They also denied that ZOE agreed with VTV to a mutual recession of the MOU.

The falsity of Brother Eddie's claim is even more apparent, by his very own notarial rescission of ZOE's MOU with VTV contained in his letter to VTV dated July 28, 2003.

Furthermore, Araneta and Enter-Net never had the opportunity to actually take over the management of Channel 11. Neither Araneta nor Enter-Net were ever allowed to enter the facilities of Channel 11 which remained under the complete control and supervision of Brother Eddie's management staff, despite repeated requests made by Araneta/Enter-Net for a turnover of management to its people.

Finally, the estafa case against Brother Eddie is simply a result of a business venture that turned sour. It is not tainted with any political motive, far from how Brother Eddie would like it to appear. The fact that Araneta is a close cousin of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo bears no relevance to the case.

—MANUEL C. BARCELONA III,
Barcelona & Associates Law Office

INoBox

As the new year begins, what's your message to the politicians?

new year, i hope they will bring us new hope for a better tomorrow!
—therese salangsang, 18, *general santos city*

unahin muna ang taumbayan, hindi ang pangu2rak0t, may g0d have mercy oN them. & m0re p0wr 2 th0se resP0nsiBle ones.
—PREMA DEVII RAMIREZ, 14, *PUER2 PRIN.CITY*

Be good public officials...Pls STOP CORRUPTION!!!
—Flobin F. Garbin, 19, *Sorsogon*

sa bawa't piso pangungurakot nyo sana maalaala nyo ang mga Pilipino naghihirap pa rin. Makonsensiya sana kayo
—sandra tan, 43, *mla*

Our politicians should look after the good of our country, specially the welfare of our poor people.
—Elma G. Selvido, 35, *Dinalupihan, Bataan*

message to the politicians? May there be less of you.
And may those who remain be in the mold of our great statesmen like Senators Salonga, Tanada and Diokno.
patricia s. Arnedo, 35, *Sorsogon City*

POLITICIANS MUST STOP QUARRELING, DEY SHOULD UNITE & WORK hand in hand to IMPROVE our AILING ECONOMY. 2 the POLITICIANS: DEY SHOULD ADRESS d PROBLEMS of their CONSTITUENTS, NOT just deir PERSONAL INTEREST dat dey are FOCUSING..
—francis del moral, 29, *SNFABIAN PNGASINAN*

they shuld change their ways. Do good 4 d country. Make sacrifices 4 a better future. Wherever they go, what they did will haunt them..
—doris sana, 45, *zamboanga*

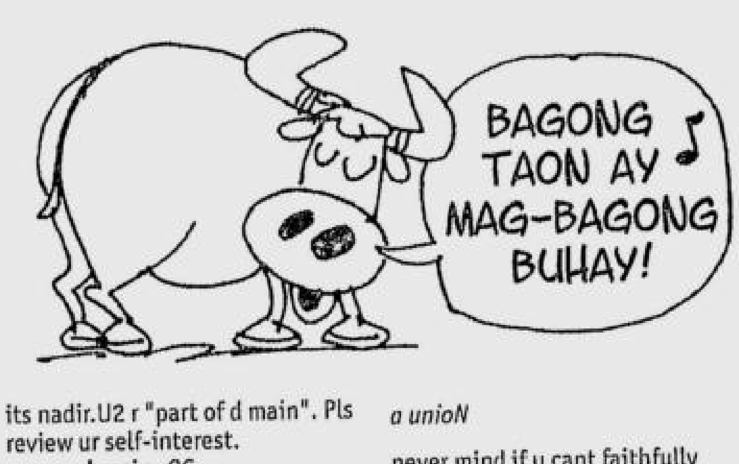
sana naman pag tiyagaan pa sila ni LORD!
—mando rugas, 43, *davao city*

i hope Gma wud resign so dat we gain peace politically, economically and nationally.
—lourdes icalia, 44, *sampaloc,mla*

sna magbago na sila di puro pagnanakaw at sarili lang ang icipin nila.Icipin naman nila ang mga taong naghalal sa kanila
—Angelito Bautista, 36, *cabanatuan city*

ULTIMATE SACRIFICE.
—IVY AVELINO, 30, *DAGAMI, LEYTE*

Failures are misjudgments of self-interests. Phil politics is failing 2 its nadir.U2 r "part of d main". Pls review ur self-interest.
—rene locsin, *QC*


BAGONG TAON AY MAG-BAGONG BUHAY!

Set aside politics, unity amidst adversities and work for the common good of their constituents.
—Greg Saraos, Intramuros, *Manila*

a new year comes new challenges. People rely on every decision u make. Make each one of them the best.
—Federico Gatchalian, 23, *taguig*

sa pagpasok ng bagong taon sana naman ay bigyang-diin ang pangangailangan ng karamihan at di ang sariling interes lamang.
—marie joy quisquisan, 27, *iligan city*

even if d people seEm 2 have lost faith or trust in U, you shld stil do sumthing, dis couNtry n its pPol stil NEEDS u..
—danielle Padilla, 16, *csf,l a unioN*

never mind if u cant faithfully serve ur constituents, but faithfully serve d LORD!
—alex, *puer2 prncesa*

may they do their jobs, or better, if they already do
—my catangay, 16, *pasig*

A simple wish to all politicians PLEASE UNITE for progress n SUPPORT our govt!
—melissa fongwan, 35, *la trinidad, benguet*

LET'S GET OUR ACTS TOGETHER and COME to our SENSES
—owen, 23, *balungao*

stop acting like U know everything and listen naman.what good are U people representing the Filipinos if all of U are living a life dats different from ours?
—sheena siao, 16, *cotabato city*

POLITICIANS SHOULD PRACTICE DYING, NOBLE PRACTICE of for DELICADEZA..
—francis del moral, 29, *san fabian pangasinan*

my message to politicians? why do i have to say anything to them? NO. %$!#@
—a.espiritu, 25, *mandaluyong*

PANDAYin ang mga tiwaling opisyal at itapon sa ENCANTADIA para don maalala nila bad nilang gawa MALAPIT NA NAMAN ELECTION!!!
—RODEL VALDEZ, 18, *Tarlac*

Make da best of everything 4 da benefit of da country and a credit on ur part.
—Lovelyn Fortaliza, 32, *Cavite*

may their work attitudes change 4 d better, as d year changes
—fernando laus, 31, *baguio city*

d politician must legislate himself, examine d heart, conscience of himself thru morality n spirituality.
—alfonso olavere, 47, *irosin sorsogon ct*

bagong taon, magbagong buhay na kaU! Maging honest public servant na, at stop na ang pangungurakot!
—marie joy quisquisan, 27, *iligan city*

to show ur sincerity in helping our government, start by giving up ur Pork Barrel and stop ur lavish spending...
—Roy Richard Ruiz, 45, *Cebu City*

please think of your countrymen before yourselves.
—leticia lafavilla, 56, *manila*

I hope next year there will be no more politician alive, but only SERVANT of THE PEOPLE. Be truthful pls!!
—Rodion Bithao, 38, *Sta. Maria Bulacan*

Tama na ang hidwaan at umpisahan ang taon na maiangat ang ekonomiya ng ating bansa.
—Arsenia Velasco, 52, *Bacoor*

MAY OUR POLITICIANS dis coming NEW YEAR, REALIZE d SIGNIFICANCE of the word: SERVICE. Dey OUGHT 2 SERVE, NOT 2 be SERVED..
—James Philip Narisma, 39, *iloilo city*

Dear Readers, Text us your comments, suggestions and views on today's news or how it was delivered. Tell us about the news you are interested in and the things you want improved in your favorite newspaper. Text INQUIRER <section keyword> name/city/message and send to 283 (Smart) or 2207 (Globe). The section keywords are indicated in the logo of each section.

Peso ascending on 2006's 1st trading day: 52.80 to dollar

From page A1

"The outlook on the Philippines continues to be positive," Avante said.

He noted that banks scrambled to sell dollars ahead of the long weekend in anticipation of pent-up inflows, thus exerting upward pressure on the local currency.

Avante said the next major support level for the peso would be between 52.75 and 52.80:$1.

Tax reforms

President Macapagal-Arroyo said that not only record-high remittances from Filipinos overseas were making the peso stronger but also the growing confidence of foreign investors in her administration's ability to turn around the country's chronic fiscal malaise.

"I am glad to report to you that in the first working day of 2006, the peso continues to strengthen closer to 52 to the dollar. This is due not only to the money sent by OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) but also to our tax reforms," said President Arroyo in a televised conference at Kalayaan Hall in Malacañang.

The President was referring to last year's fiscal reform package anchored on the expansion of the value-added tax, which foreign and local experts said would boost government revenues and cut government borrowings.

"With the decrease in the government deficit, the confidence in our economy is growing and capital is flowing in from abroad," the President said.

"This is now the time to cement the confidence of foreign investors in our country. Let us show them that we will not retreat from our reforms and that we will unite to push forward economic development," she said.

Peso to remain strong

The Development Bank of Singapore, in a recent commentary, estimated that for every 1 percentage point increase in OFW remittances, the peso appreciates by about 0.04 percent or 2 centavos.

DBS expects the peso to stay strong and the BSP to keep key overnight interest rates steady should remittances continue to flow vigorously and an upgrade of credit ratings remains possible.

"However, the spread of local rates over US rates continues to narrow, leaving the currency vulnerable to domestic, economic and political risks," DBS said.

"Furthermore, although inflation has stabilized and core inflation eased, the central bank remains wary of inflationary pressures with the implementation of the VAT (expanded value-added tax)," DBS said.

The BSP may tighten its overnight rates by 50 basis points, particularly in the first quarter of the year when the increase in the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent is implemented, according to DBS.

Revised remittance figures

Tetangco said the BSP may revise upward its projection on remittances from OFWs for this year given the strong performance in 2005. At present, the BSP is expecting an increase of 10 percent in OFW inflows for 2006 from last year.

The BSP estimated that OFW remittances would hit an all-time high of $12.3 billion in 2005, including those coursed outside the banking system. Of the total, $10.7 billion or about 87 percent went through the formal channels.

The government assumes that at least 20 percent of total remittances is slipping past the formal channels in its balance of payment computation, but the so-called leakage is slowly being addressed.

Informal channels refer to unlicensed or unregulated operations such as friends of OFWs, acquaintances or other travelers.

Based on the BSP assessment, vigorous marketing efforts by commercial banks, such as enhanced money transfer services, more remittance centers and tie-ups with foreign financial institutions and collection agents were encouraging more OFWs to send funds into the country through the formal banking channels.

The BSP has been promoting the use of formal financial institutions as these are seen to provide accessible, timely and safe channels for remittance transactions, and help develop better savings habits.

Mexican experience

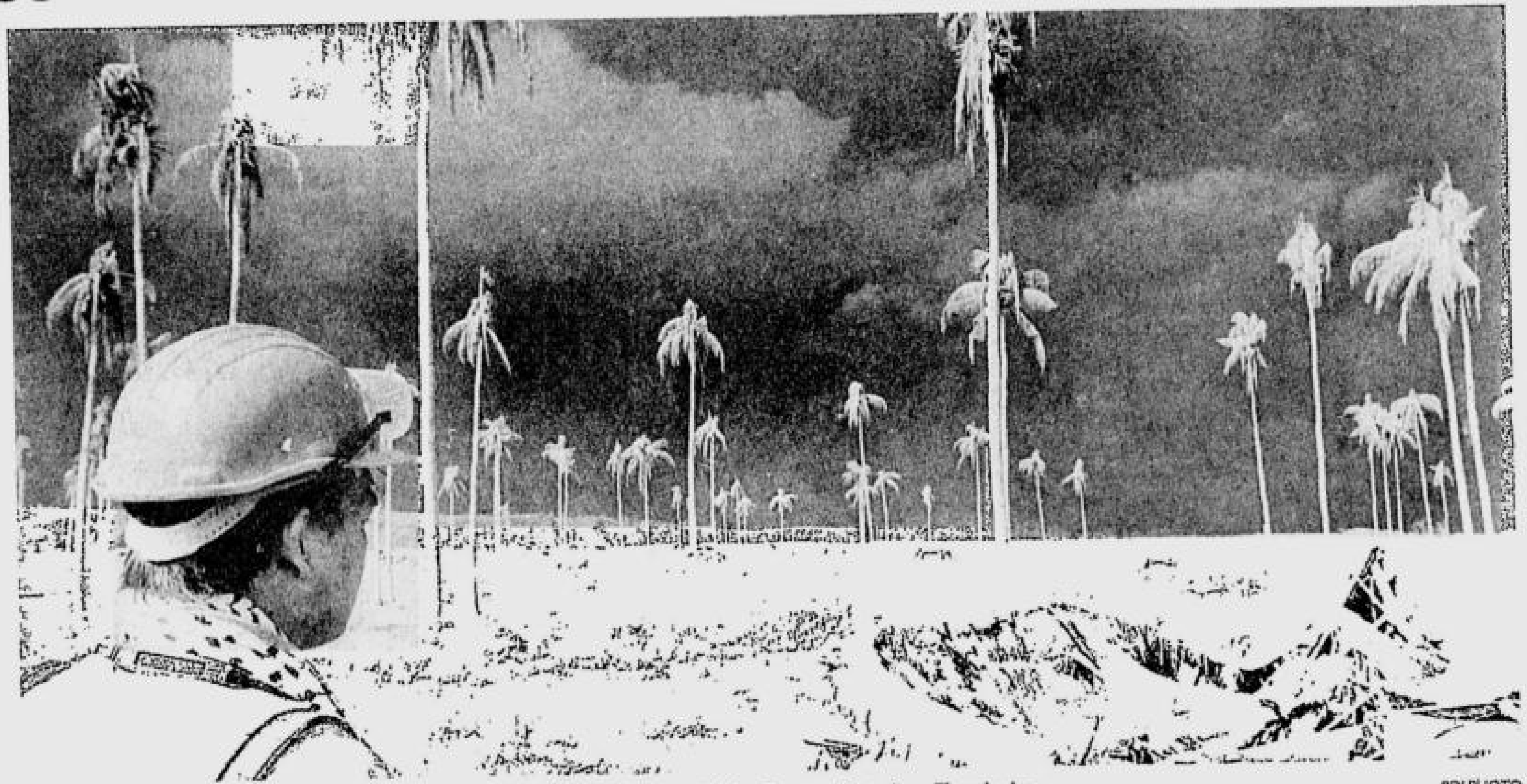
Based on the Mexican experience, remittances held as deposits in the banking system had a beneficial multiplier effect of between two and three times as these could be channeled to investments, including small- and micro-businesses.

From a stop-gap measure initiated by the government to curb unemployment in the 1970s, the deployment of workers overseas has developed into a vital industry, generating foreign exchange bigger than foreign investment inflows.

Some eight million OFWs, about 10 percent of the Philippine population, are deployed abroad. Three million of them are permanent residents of other countries. The five million who are not permanent residents are equivalent to 14 percent of the country's labor force.

Covering the biggest bang of the 20th century

From page A1



WINTERLAND OF DEVASTATION: Post-eruption landscape of Sitio Oguec, Botolan, Zambales.

PDI PHOTO

"It won't happen soon," was what Basa got from Dr. Raymundo Punongbayan when he asked the government's chief volcanologist when he thought the long-dormant Pinatubo would reawaken.

But a source at Clark Air Base, which was then still in the control of the United States, had dropped a hint to Basa.

Monitor Americans

"Monitor the movements of the American troops. When they finally go, that's the danger signal," the source said.

When the exodus did begin just a few days before the "big bang," Basa was positioned at the main gate of the tightly guarded US base and captured the images of GIs streaming out of the camp, their pet cats and dogs in tow.

"D-Day" remains fresh in his mind.

Just before noon of June 12, Basa was headed for Clark to cover the Independence Day rites. When he reached the gate of his subdivision in San Fernando, however, he realized that he had forgotten his cameras. He dispatched the tricycle driver to get his equipment from his house.

"I had a gut feel that something was going to happen that day. My two cameras were ready," he said.

Already he could see people in panic as he approached the corner of the Holy Angel University in Angeles City.

"They were walking south, away from a gray cloud that was hovering above the city and expanding fast westward from the dome of the Sto. Rosario Church," he said.

With cameras slung over his neck and shoulder, Basa climbed the Glo-Ann building which was still under construction.

"Even as I climbed up the steps, I was setting the lens. On the third floor, I stepped on fresh cement. My feet sank, but I paid no heed. I took two shots using the telephoto and five shots with the wide angle [lens]," he said.

No cell phones yet

He then went to a nearby police station to call the Inquirer desk but the station had no long-distance call capability. He then went to City Hall, but again failed to place a call.

He took a jeepney, sat himself in front beside the driver, his camera at the ready, just in case. He thought he would try to use the phone at the Coca Cola Bottling Co. in Barangay Balite, but was stopped by a security guard. Luckily, he was recognized by a company employee who gave him access to a phone.

He was able to get through to Nilo Paurom, the city editor at the time.

"Perhaps sensing my feelings of inadequacy, Nilo told me as I proceeded to give him the details of what I saw: 'Basa, use Tagalog or English, just don't tell your story in Kapampangan ... and send the photos immediately'," he said.

There were no digital cameras or e-mail at the time. Basa placed two rolls of film in an envelope and hailed a Philippine Rabbit bus. The bus took the rolls to the station near the Odeon Theater on Rizal Avenue where a staffer from the Inquirer, whose offices were then on UN Avenue in Ermita, collected them.

Confident that he had met his deadline, Basa proceeded to the Shanghai Restaurant in Angeles City, a journalist watering hole. He sat quietly sipping the free coffee as colleagues boasted of their best photos and stories that day.

The next day, he was out early and grabbing copies of the Inquirer. The story hit the front page, and his photos were on the inside pages.

Basa realized he was no longer just a photographer. He had become a reporter.

"Collectively, the local photographers and reporters beat their international and Metro Manila-based counterparts despite lacking the facilities and equipment. We delivered. We were soon being called the Pinatubo Boys," he said.

Basa and three other local reporters then went to Porac where from the town hall he could see steam coming out of the volcano. The evacuation of the town had started and relief goods were beginning to trickle in.

Bracing himself for the worst, Basa set up a two-way radio and antenna system in his home. He also noted down the radio frequency of all the police and local officials of the affected towns.

The climactic eruption occurred just after lunch on June 15.

"*Gu-du-gu-dong* was the sound I frequently heard. Fred Roxas (of the Manila Bulletin) exclaimed, '*Magugunaw na ang mundo*' (It's the end of the world). It began to rain ash, sand, stones and wet mud even as a storm raged. We were in Sta. Cruz, Porac, when this happened. We had to get off our Volkswagen Beetle several times to wipe the ash off the windshield. There was an earthquake occurring almost every minute," he said.

Dilemma

Soon, Basa found himself grappling with a dilemma. Should he first see to the safety of his family and go to the rescue of the relatives of his colleague, Lincoln Baluyut, whose house had caved in from the weight of the wet volcanic debris? Or should he go on taking photographs and filing stories?

"I decided to put the safety of my children first," Basa said. He sent his family off to Caloocan City, packing 17 family members into a jeep, which to him was miracle enough.

Paurom was furious the next morning.

"Basa, it took 600 years for this volcano to erupt again, and you weren't there for it?" Paurom thundered on the phone.

But apparently aware of Basa's self-doubts, Paurom also took care to assure the correspondent that he was there to help.

Resourceful

"Nilo really pushed me. I was mainly a photographer, not a writer. I can capture images through my camera, not through words. With Nilo's encouragement, I decided I was going to be a reporter," Basa said.

And he proved to be a very resourceful one too. To inject color into his stories, he monitored the exchange of communications between village officials and the disaster councils via two-way radio. Always, he had two recorders recording the conversations which he would then transcribe.

This was how Basa got wind of reports of an outbreak of diarrhea in evacuation centers in Porac and Floridablanca towns.

The trust that he had cultivated among his news sources also helped a lot. He got the food shortage story from social welfare officer Susan Dimabuyu.

"She earned the ire of some of her superiors because of my story. But she told the truth and stood by it," he said.

Occasionally, the local reporters would feast on ready-to-eat food packages that they would learn later were excess supplies from the US military's Operation Desert Storm in Iraq.

Like thousands of horses

He also learned how to stake out stories, particularly the deadly lahar rampages, the images of which still haunt him like a surreal dream.

"In Porac, lahar came like the sound of thousands of horses in a violent stampede. It flowed in smooth, thick waves, leaving trails of steam and the pungent smell of sulfur," Basa said.

He also saw death, particularly of the people who were scalded and buried by lahar at Barangay Maliwalu in Bacolor town on Oct. 1, 1995.

He said he could not forget a dialogue in Bacolor a few weeks before the Oct. 1 lahar rampage that buried the town.

Punongbayan was right

"At the San Guillermo church, Punongbayan told the town's residents that he was 95 percent sure that lahar would bury the town, that the Pasig-Potrero River was the most dangerous pathway. He warned the residents to leave town, only to be told off by one man: '*Ta Dios ka? Ot balu mu ing malyari kekami*? (Are you God? Why do you know what's going to happen to us?).' Punongbayan, who remained cool and unfailingly helpful, was to be proven right," Basa said.

Basa noted that the job of reporting was relatively more difficult at the time.

"With no computers or mobile phones, I had to be resourceful and improvise wherever I was when the deadline came," he said in a mixture of Filipino and English.

He would always have copies of the Inquirer with him to show people his byline so he would be allowed the use of a phone. And he would get free snacks that way too.

'For the people'

He said proudly that he never allowed the Inquirer to be out-scooped.

"I believe in what I do. During a time of need, I think I did my part for the province by reporting the events as best I could. The late Joe Marquez of the Manila Times had a phrase for journalists' commitment—'*Para sa tao*(For the people)'," he said.

Basa said the experience of reporting on the Pinatubo eruption and its aftermath was "priceless."

"Other journalists haven't gone through that. But were it not for my editors, especially Nilo, I wouldn't have delivered. I owe him a lot," he said.

Not only for dogs, 2006 is also Year of the Turtle

From page A1

a symbolic turning point and the first time the problems of marine turtles were seriously discussed among so many governments with a common commitment to take action," said Douglas Hykke, head of the UN Secretariat overseeing the implementation of the IOSEA agreement.

5 of 7 species here in RP

Of the seven known species of marine turtles in the world, five are found in the Philippines: The loggerhead, leatherback, olive ridley, hawksbill and green turtle.

The Turtle Islands off the coast of Palawan are identified as among the most important conservation sites for the endangered marine turtles.

The Turtle Islands, named so because of their rare marine inhabitants, straddle the border of Malaysia and the Philippines.

Of the nine islands belonging to this group, six—Boan, Taganak, Bakkungan, Lihiman, Langaan and Baguan—are managed by the Philippines while three are managed by Malaysia.

Heritage park nesting site

The Philippine and Malaysian governments established the Turtle Islands Heritage Park (Tihpa), declared a sanctuary for the marine turtles, in 1996. The Tihpa is jointly managed by the two countries.

The Tihpa is Southeast Asia's largest remaining nesting site for green turtles. About 80 percent of the turtle nestings in the Philippines are on the six islands, according to the World Wildlife Fund, which has been doing conservation efforts on the Turtle Islands for almost two decades.

Some 1.2 million turtle eggs have hatched on the islands over the past 15 years, but many of these ended up being sold by fishermen, according to the latest WWF case study on the Turtle Islands.

The turtle egg trade has been a source of income for people of the Turtle Islands, a sixth-class municipality relying mostly on coastal resources for livelihood.

Eyeglass frames

The eggs are popular as a delicacy—with some believing it to be an aphrodisiac—and as choice material for eyeglass frames, lighters, combs and decorative items.

Southeast Asia is considered the world's biggest consumer of turtle eggs, with those from the Philippines finding their way to Hong Kong, Singapore and Brunei.

"Having survived natural hazards for millennia, sea turtles are now under severe threat from human activity," the WWF said.

The biggest threats come from dynamite fishing, indiscriminate harvesting of eggs, conversion of the sandy areas where turtles nest to resorts and other commercial facilities.

Mundita Lim, assistant director of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, said the IOSEA agreement was crucial to the protection of marine turtles because it required parallel and intergovernmental measures.

"The Philippines is a major pathway of the *pawikan*," Lim said. "It would be useless to protect the migratory species if the other range states do not protect them."

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MILF sees peace with gov't this year

COTABATO CITY—THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION Front (MILF) has expressed optimism that the eight-year-old peace process with the government would be completed this year.

Mohaqher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator, said both parties are expected to wrap up talks on ancestral domain and face the final agenda of the peace process—to find a just, lasting and comprehensive negotiated political solution to the so-called Bangsamoro problem in Mindanao.

"The prospect of (attaining) peace has become more realistic this year as the two parties, despite the off-an-on controversies, like 'recruitment and training of new MILF members,' are zeroing in on a negotiated political settlement as the only civilized and practical solution to this conflict," Iqbal said.

Iqbal and his counterpart in the government, Silvestre Afable, were supposed to resume talks last December but Malaysia opted to postpone it due to the Asean Summit.

The next meeting, tentatively scheduled later this month, would still be exploratory but Iqbal described it to be a preview of the final talks.

"We will bring in a power house delegation that will include the five-man MILF peace panel, the secretariat and its 12-man technical working group," he said.

He, however, refused to give a timeline, claiming both parties are prepared anytime but Malaysia, which has been hosting the talks since 2001, would give the go signal.

Assessing the peace process, Iqbal said both sides have been showing increasing trust and confidence with each other, and are confident they could overcome obstacles along the way. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Inside job seen in P4-M heist at PNCC office

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Police investigators are considering a possible "inside job" in last Sunday's robbery at the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) field office in Calamba City wherein 15 heavily-armed suspects clad in police uniforms took away P4 million cash and nine handguns of the company's security guards.

Supt. Reynato Alberto, deputy chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Calabarzon, said their initial investigation revealed that the robbery seemed to have been well planned.

He said it also looked like the suspects knew where the cash vaults were and who among the PNCC employees knew the number combination of the vaults.

"It seemed that the suspects exactly knew where to go. *Hindi na nga sila nagtingin-tingin pa sa ibang lugar sa loob ng* compound (They did not look at other places inside the compound)," Alberto told the INQUIRER in an interview at his office.

He said they were still gathering statements from the eight employees, including four security guards, who were at the office when the robbery took place.

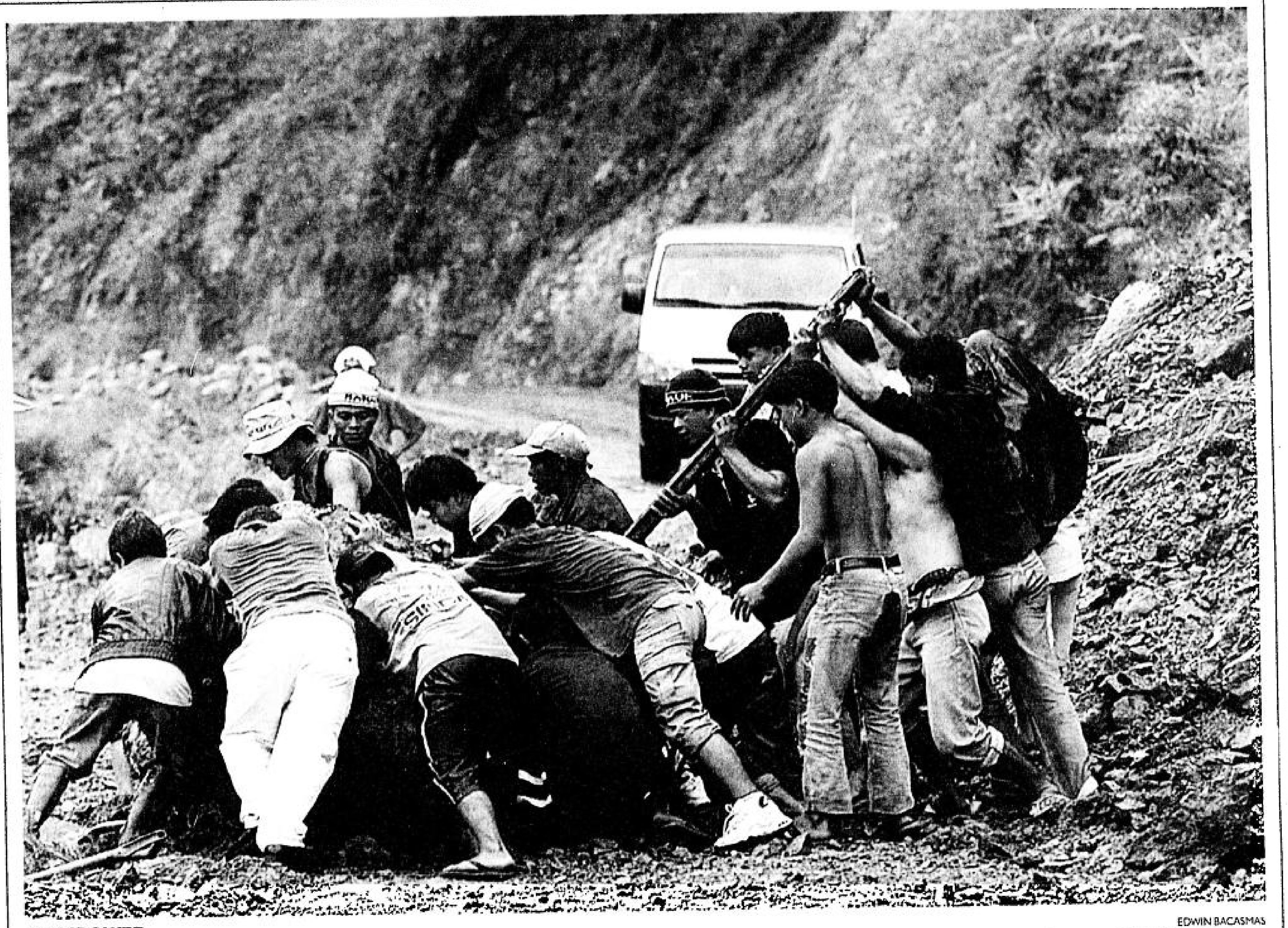
Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa, Calabarzon police director, had already created a special investigation team led by Supt. Rodrigo Agojo, chief of the Regional Special Operations Group, to solve the robbery case.

Verzosa said the suspects, wearing uniforms of the police Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team, arrived at the PNCC office near the Silangan exit of the South Luzon Expressway at about 12:10 a.m. on board three vehicles.

He said the suspects identified themselves as members of the local police to duty guard Florencio Ablaya, 35, and added that they were just responding to a reported shooting in the area.

After they were allowed entrance, the suspects quickly disarmed the unsuspecting guard and proceeded to the security guards' station where they hogtied Ablaya and two other duty guards.

Three of the suspects then went to the collection division of the PNCC and ordered cashier Marilyn Vendavil, teller Isabela Agduyang, clerk Flor Valdez, and supervisor Raul Saluson to lie face down on the floor. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



EDWIN BACASMAS

MANPOWER

There is no substitute for cooperation when nature strikes as these men show when they put together their strengths to remove boulders to clear a road in Talubin, Bontoc following a landslide. It took them three and a half hours to clear the road.

GMA asks mayors to enforce uniform house design in terraces

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, a frequent visitor to Ifugao's rice terraces, was so disturbed by the sight of shanties around the mountain farms that she asked local mayors on Saturday to implement a plan requiring a uniform design for structures there.

The government had long adopted the master plan for restoring the terraces to their previous glory--a requirement by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) when it inscribed the terraces in the World Heritage List in 1995.

Residents had objected to the government proposal, which required them to redesign their houses according to 30 suggestions derived from the original Ifugao huts of the 15th, 17th and 19th centuries.

Ms Arroyo told reporters at the Mansion here on Saturday that she also asked the mayors to relocate "informal settlers" of the terraces to lands that would be identified by Environment Secretary Michael Defensor.

But this suggestion may also raise some problems because those "settlers" are the actual owners of the terraces, said Purificacion Molintas, Cordillera tourism director.

Molintas said everyone in the Cordillera is considered an "informal settler" because of outdated land titling rules that restrict ownership of steep-sloped lands and because of forestry laws that have categorized most Cordillera property as part of the national forest reserve.

Ms Arroyo, who toured the rice terraces of Banaue and Hungduan towns on Saturday, said her annual trip to the terraces energized her spirit because of Ifugao's cordial reception. "I'm an expert already in the rice terraces," she said.

This familiarity, she said, had emboldened her to bring along friends and dignitaries to Ifugao as often as she could.

Molintas said the President was concerned about the area's overall aesthetics.

The country is hosting the Asian Tourism Forum in two weeks, and Molintas has been tasked with hosting a sub-ministerial meeting in Banaue, home of the Battad terraces that are more popular because these have been used in postcards.

But newly built view decks do not hide poverty in the area, the official said. Ifugao is among the poorest provinces.

Molintas said the master plan would reintroduce indigenous knowledge to the communities to improve local economy.

She said the uniform design proposals for houses in the terraces were not meant to be superficial.

Plans for repairing the terraces, for example, draw heavily from anthropological reconstructions of indigenous irrigation systems that are crucial to making these terraces produce abundant rice again, according to documents obtained by the INQUIRER.

Revitalize Indigenous Cordilleran Entrepreneurs Inc. (Rice), a non-government organization, has started organizing terrace farmers in Ifugao because of American and Canadian interest in organic indigenous rice.

Also on Saturday, Ms Arroyo ordered the National Museum to relinquish control of a museum to the local government of Kabayan, Benguet. The museum houses the famous Benguet mummies.

Molintas said the President took her first look at a 15th century mummy, whose features were reconstructed by Cheryl Young, a forensic anthropologist of the University of Wyoming.

Tourists warned anew vs climbing Mayon

LEGAZPI CITY—LOCAL AUTHORITIES have renewed their warning to tourists, especially foreigners, against climbing the Mayon Volcano as it is still on alert level 2.

The warning came after three French nationals were reported lost on Saturday but came back safe on Sunday after 12 hours of trekking to Camp One of the Mayon Volcano without a local guide, map and flashlight, and the knowledge of concerned authorities.

Arnel Capili, Office of the Civil Defense regional director, said it was fortunate that the French were safe, for most foreigners who climb Mayon seek local guides, coordinate with barangay officials, and even ask the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council and the Provincial Tourism Council for permits to climb.

For the first time in the history of climbing the perfect cone-shaped Mayon Volcano, two of the three French nationals spent their New Year's Eve at Camp One of the 2,468-meter high volcano after they got lost.

Amazingly, they returned back safe at the Legazpi Tourist Inn in the city proper at about 7 a.m. on Sunday without the knowledge of local authorities that assembled a joint rescue operation.

Florence Bal and Alexie Coquelin of France were able to reach the 821-meter high Camp One of Mount Mayon.

Equipped only with a bottle of distilled water, bananas, one shirt each and a camera, Bal and Coquelin said they experienced coldness, hunger and scratches—and even panicked a bit when they got stuck for the first time in their trek.

Thanks to their friend, Sophie Germond, who decided to stay behind at Barangay Buyuan, local authorities from the OCD, Public Safety Office and 40 local volunteers were easily informed about the two French hikers.

But it was only on Sunday that operatives of the responding agencies laid out their plans for a rescue operation, including using a helicopter.

To their surprise, however, they found the two already back safely at the hotel.

It was the first time for Bal and Coquelin to climb Mount Mayon. The two and Germond were here to spend the holidays by not only climbing Mayon but also going scuba diving at Ticao Island in Masbate to have an encounter with manta rays.

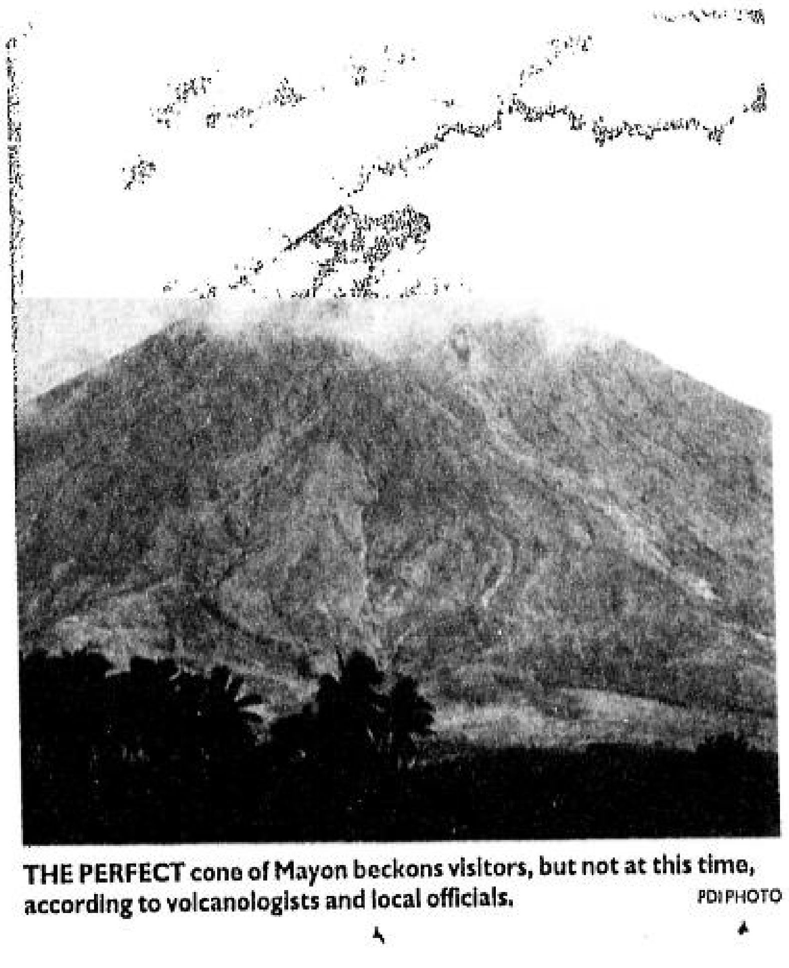
Germond, a dentist by profession, said she was very thankful she did not lose her senses. She immediately asked the help of the villagers in contacting local authorities that could provide immediate assistance.

"Of course, I was so worried since we climbed at about 1 p.m. At about 4 or 5 p.m., I could sense that my two friends were already lost. I was so glad I stayed at the nearby St. Peter's Chapel where there were people who helped me," she said.

In an interview at the hotel, Bal and Coquelin said they never lost hope of finding their way out of the unfamiliar trails they trekked.

"Aside from shouting for help, we even used the flash of my camera to get attention, in case there would be a chopper or local hiker who could see us but to no avail," Coquelin, a policeman, said.

Bal, a longtime nurse, said they just wanted to look around, have a closer look at Mayon and take some photos. But they got lost. *Gil Francis Arevalo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



THE PERFECT cone of Mayon beckons visitors, but not at this time, according to volcanologists and local officials.

PDIPHOTO

PAO wants NBI to probe murder convict's death

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE CHIEF OF THE PUBLIC ATTORNEYS OFfice (PAO) will push for the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to probe the death of a man who had been convicted for the murder of opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. and his alleged assassin, Rolando Galman, in 1983.

"I will request the (Department of Justice) to order the NBI to conduct an investigation of the incident, and also how the alleged shooter managed to bring a pistol and a knife inside the (New Bilibid Prisons) compound," PAO chief counsel Percida Acosta said yesterday.

Acosta said the NBI inquiry shall determine whether the killing of former Airman First Class Cordova G. Estelo was plainly the consequence of a prison scuffle, or if something deeper was behind it.

Estelo was among the 16 Aviation Security Command (Avsecom) soldiers who had been sentenced to double life imprisonment in 1990 for the death of Aquino and Galman.

"It could be part of (a plan to liquidate) all the Aquino-Galman convicts to silence them," said Acosta.

Estelo was stabbed dead by another inmate, Manuel Ocenar, on Saturday inside the NBP maximum compound.

Acosta said Estelo's death may be part of a ploy to kill those involved in the Aquino-Galman double murder, with the recent issuance of an arrest warrant against Capt. Felipe Valerio, the head of the Avsecom team sent to arrest Aquino at the tarmac of the Manila International Airport on Aug. 21, 1983.

The lawyer believed the convicts could implicate Valerio in the assassination plot and at the same time prove that they were merely fall guys. Hence, if they were to be "liquidated," there would be nobody left to testify, she added.

Acosta said she would also ask the DOJ to consider transferring the 14 remaining Aquino-Galman convicts to the NBP's minimum security compound for "humanitarian considerations."

Eva Tomenio, Estelo's sister, said that the last time she visited him in prison, he had talked excitedly about being set free.

"He was very vibrant when I last talked to him, because he was hoping that very soon, he could go out on parole ... he was already [eligible] for clemency for the time that he had already served," Tomenio told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Despite the repeated denial of their appeals for a new trial with the discovery of new evidence in the case, the convicted soldiers, including Estelo, have maintained their innocence.

Tomenio said she last saw Estelo on Dec. 22, when she and the other Aquino-Galman murder convicts had treated him to a belated birthday celebration. He had turned 58 two days earlier, a non-visitation day at the NBP.

"(He wouldn't have died) had they been granted clemency. They are not murderers, they were only used by some people," she said.

On Sunday afternoon, Estelo finally got his wish. Tomenio took his body home to Bayang Luma, Imus, Cavite. Interment has been tentatively set on Saturday, at the Manila Memorial Park in Dasmariñas.

Victim had wondered why Ver congratulated them on day Ninoy died

THE DEATH OF CORDOVA G. Estelo brings down to 14 the number of surviving Aviation Security Command (Avsecom) soldiers who were convicted for the 1983 murder of opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino Jr. and Rolando Galman, the man that the military had tagged as Aquino's assassin.

Their senior officer, Avsecom chief Brig. Gen. Luther Custodio, died of cancer in 1991.

Airman First Class Cordova G. Estelo of the Avsecom SWAT Team Alpha admitted to shooting Galman, but told the Fact-Finding Agrava Board in 1983 that there was no "shoot to kill" order. He said they were told to shoot "if an attacker had a gun, [or] to arrest if unarmed."

According to the Agrava report, Estelo said he had seen his teammates firing at Galman and had joined in because he thought Galman was the enemy.

Estelo also rode in the van that brought Aquino's body to Fort Bonifacio, and remembered touching Aquino's hand in the van.

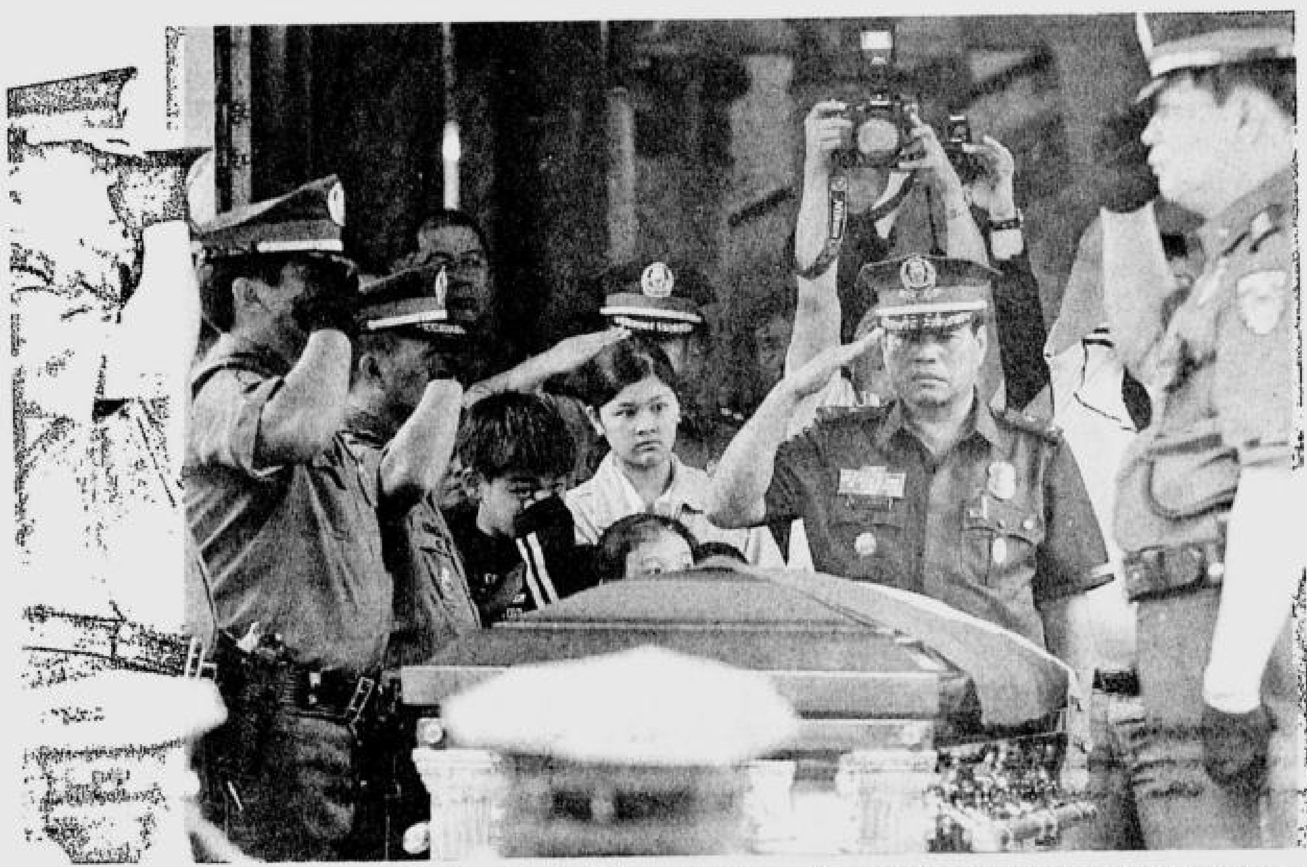
In a 2003 INQUIRER interview, he said it "pained" him to learn of the theory that Aquino may have been hit on the head inside the van to make sure he was dead.

But he said he had always wondered why, on the day of the murders, the then Armed Forces chief Gen. Fabian Ver went up to their team to congratulate them.

The highest-ranking officer of the group now would be Avsecom intelligence director Capt. Romeo Bautista.

The rest are Sgt. Pablo Martinez; 2nd Lt. Jesus Castro; Technical Sgt. Filomeno Miranda; Sergeants Claro Lat and Arnulfo de Mesa; Constables First Class Mario Lazaga and Rogelio Moreno (who was tagged by the Sandiganbayan as Aquino's killer); SWAT Team Alpha Sergeants Rodolfo Desolong, Ernesto'Mateo, Rolando de Guzman, Ruben Aquino, Arnulfo Artates and A1C Felizardo Taran.

Jamie Alarcon, PDI Research



MANILA Police District Director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong led his men in according arrival honors yesterday to the body of former Sen. Robert Barbers. Barbers started as a beat patrolman at the police district, then known as the Western Police District.

REM ZAMORA

Lim, Manila policemen pay tribute to Barbers

By Margaux C. Ortiz

"HE WAS ABOVE THE ORDINARY LAW ENforcer, knowing police work from A-Z."

With these words, Sen. Alfredo Lim and other retired and active policemen welcomed back former Sen. Robert "Bobby" Barbers to the Manila Police District (MPD) headquarters, where he had established his reputation as an outstanding police officer and investigator.

"He was a good man, a devoted police officer," Lim told the INQUIRER, wistfully looking at Barbers' dark brown coffin which was draped with a Philippine flag.

Lim, who worked with Barbers at the Manila Police Department, then called the Western Police District, for 15 years, said the former senator began his law enforcement career as a beat patrolman.

Barbers' dedication to his job and exceptional investigative skills led to his recognition as one of the Ten Outstanding Policemen of the Philippines (TOPP) in 1981, Lim said.

As MPD chief, Lim appointed Barbers as the commander of the Ermita Police Station, where he "did a good job in closing down illegal nightclubs and bars."

He added that Barbers was also responsible for bringing to justice the members of the notorious Pandatu Gang, a family of bank robbers who terrorized the metropolis and nearby provinces.

Lim said that as a police major detailed at the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Barbers also help bring dreaded drug lord Don Pepe Oyson's case to a close.

Barbers died on Christmas Day of heart failure at the age of 61. He will be buried on Wednesday at the Manila Memorial Park in Sucat, Parañaque.

VACC: Implement death penalty now

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

WORRIED ABOUT THE "WORSENing peace and order situation" in the country, an anti-crime group has reiterated an old wish for the new year.

For the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC), this is the time to resume the imposition of the death penalty.

"We are appealing to President Macapagal-Arroyo to implement the death penalty law," VACC head Dante Jimenez said.

The group renewed its call after the killing of Pasay City Judge Henrick Gingoyon on Saturday.

"This now the time to implement the law. Judges are being killed left and right. Journalists are being killed. Ordinary citizens are being killed like chickens," Jimenez said.

He was at the wake of Gingoyon in Bacoor, Cavite yesterday afternoon.

He said that Gingoyon was the 10th judge to be killed in the last six years.

Jailed former President Joseph Estrada had declared a moratorium on judicial executions in 2001 after putting seven convicts to death between 1998 and 1999.

Ms Arroyo continued the ban when she replaced Estrada in 2001.

Jimenez said he has already spoken to Ms Arroyo about the reimposition of the death penalty.

Gingoyon, 53, of the Pasay City Regional Trial Court Branch 117, was shot dead by one of two men on board a motorcycle on Dec. 30 as he was walking home in Barangay Molino, Bacoor, Cavite.

My New Year's wishes and resolution

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

EVERYBODY HAS WISHES OR RESOlutions for the New Year.

My wishes and resolution are simple.

Let's start with my resolution: I will avoid cursing on my radio program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo."

However, my not cursing will be predicated on the fast action of government agencies and people handling the investigations into citizens' complaints against abusive law enforcers.

Government apathy or inaction on abuses committed by people who are sworn to serve and protect the citizenry makes one curse.

One of my New Year's wishes is addressed to the following agencies: National Police Commission (Napolcom); Internal Affair Service (IAS) of the police; People' s Law Enforcement Board (PLEB); and the different units within the Philippine National Police (PNP) that investigate complaints of abuses by its personnel: Please dispose of cases promptly.

Another New Year's wish is addressed to Malolos, Bulacan Judge Andres Soriano, in whose hands have been transferred the rape case against Jeff Quesada, a complete paralytic.

Jeff's case is one for Ripley's.

The original judge trying the case, Maria Belen Ringpis-Liban, apparently couldn't tell a quadriplegic or complete paralytic from a "normal" person, and so delayed action on the case for more than two years. However, she had the good sense to inhibit herself from the case after being severely criticized in this space.

So, to Judge Soriano: Is it asking too much to plead for a fast resolution of Jeff's rape case?

Jeff, who can't go to the toilet without being carried by two men, has already spent three Christmases in jail.

And still another wish is addressed to the Napolcom and the Quezon City Regional Trial Court handling the frame-up case against city six cops filed by a mechanic, Ricky Romualdo.

Romualdo was found innocent of peddling drugs by another Quezon City court and freed after languishing for one year in jail.

With the help of my public service program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo," Romualdo has filed a case for "planting" [evidence] under the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act against the cops. The new law imposes the death penalty on cops who "plant" drugs on innocent citizens.

* * *

Policemen receiving or investigating complaints from citizens should show a little sympathy toward crime victims or families of the victims.

PO3 Florencio Escobido did no such thing when he handled the twin murders of brothers Froilan and Arnold Jimeno. He was even rude to the victims' relatives.

The Jimenos were killed in cold blood by Quezon City police Senior Insp. Michael Sanchez after a traffic incident. Another brother, Ferdinand, 39, died of a heart attack upon learning of his brothers' deaths.

Investigator Escobido allegedly demanded *merienda* and transportation money from the wives of the victims. He also unashamedly used the widows' cellular phones for his personal calls.

"He treated us like we were the suspects," said Marilou, wife of Froilan, a referee of the Philippine Basketball League (PBL).

While Escobido was rude to the wives of the murder victims, the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) was handling suspect Sanchez with kid gloves.

Sanchez, assigned to the QCPD mobile patrol unit, was allowed to roam around the criminal investigation division unguarded.

It was only after my program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo," complained about the VIP treatment being given Sanchez that the police senior inspector was placed behind bars.

METROBRIEFS

Preferential treatment

A RESOLUTION urging owners of shopping malls, schools, and airports to reserve parking space for expectant mothers has been passed on second reading by the Quezon City council. Authored by Restituto Malangen and 12 other councilors, the resolution further urges owners of public and private buildings, sports and recreation centers and similar establishments, to always give pregnant women access to suitable parking spots. The resolution also covers seating spaces in establishments like movie theaters and restaurants. "A child-bearing mother should be given appropriate care and attention," said the proponents of the resolution. They also expressed hope that the measure would help an expectant mother "through the nine months of her pregnancy and enhance her welfare and the well-being of the child in her womb."

DJ Yap

Baffling case

POLICE remain puzzled by the death of an Indian man who was allegedly abducted in Cainta, Rizal on Dec. 28. Cmaranjit Singh's body was found the following day in Barangay San Luis, Antipolo City. Investigators are studying the possible link between his death and the attempt to kidnap another Indian national in Antipolo City. Both incidents happened on Dec. 28. Singh, who was about 40 years old, had been stabbed several times. "The victim could have been killed elsewhere and was just dumped in the city to confuse investigators," Antipolo City Police chief Supt. Primitivo Tabujara told the INQUIRER. Unlike Singh, the other Indian national managed to escape from his abductors who were on board a Mitsubishi Lancer and a Toyota Tamaraw FX. He is now cooperating in the investigation. Police believe the killing of Singh could be business-related but Tabujara said they were still looking at other possible motives.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

High-tech security in banks

HI-TECH NA DIN KASI ANG MGA MAGNANAKAW!

IT'S HIGH time that banks implement high-tech security measures against robbers, according to Quezon City councilors. Alarm systems are not enough to deter bank robbers nowadays, according to Resty Malangen and four other councilors. The way to go is a closed-circuit television monitoring system, they said. The city lawmakers have filed a proposed ordinance requiring bank owners to use not only an alarm system connected to a police station, but also a surveillance system to detect the movements of would-be robbers. A closed-circuit TV monitoring system can make it easier for investigators to identify bank robbers or even stop them before they can make a move, the councilors said. The security device can also prove useful in case the alarm system fails to operate, they added. Under the proposed measure, bank owners shall be required to equip their banks with alarms and a closed-circuit TV monitoring system.

DJ Yap

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Year of the Dog off to fiery start

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Nancy C. Carvajal

ONLY TWO DAYS INTO THE NEW YEAR, dubbed as the Year of the Fire Dog in the Chinese calendar, firemen are already finding things too hot to handle.

After battling three fires in Manila and Mandaluyong on Jan. 1, firefighters were hard at work again yesterday morning, putting out three fires that broke out in Manila and Caloocan City.

In Tondo, Manila, a Chinese-Filipino couple were killed after a fire gutted their rented home.

FO1 Guillermo Fermalino Jr. identified the victims as Lorenzo and Virginia Ngo, of Room 601, Josefa Building, No. 587 corner Padre Rada and Ilaya Streets.

The couple's four children survived the fire, the arson investigator said in his report.

Fermalino said witnesses saw thick black smoke coming from Rooms 601 and 604 occupied by another family at 4:36 a.m.

The fire destroyed P100,000 worth of property at the seven-story residential and commercial building before it was put out at 6:30 a.m.

Fermalino said they are still investigating the cause of the fire.

Less than an hour after the fire in Tondo began, a smaller fire destroyed P10,000 worth of property in Binondo, Manila.

The fire, which started at 5:15 a.m., destroyed the mezzanine of the four-story residential building at 1080 Aguilar St.

The mezzanine was occupied by a certain Stanley Co, fire officials said.

The fire reached the third alarm before it was put out at 6:54 a.m.

Nobody was reportedly injured in the second incident, arson investigators said.

Meanwhile, the quick reaction of residents in a densely populated area prevented more damage to property when fire struck an abandoned shanty in Caloocan City, an arson investigator said.

"The immediate action of the residents using the *'timba'* brigade slowed down the spread of the fire which could have caused more destruction," said SFO2 Zoilo Crisostomo.

LAST HURRAH
Children enjoy the last day of the holiday season by going on a fun ride at a carnival in Quezon City. Tomorrow, most of them will go back to school as the Christmas break comes to a close. EDWIN BACASMAS

Crisostomo said the fire broke out at around 7:10 a.m. at 6457 Libis Espina St., Barangay 18, left at least 10 families homeless.

Except for a 70-year-old woman who suffered minor burns on the forehead, no other persons were reported injured.

The cause of the fire, which started in a deserted house, has yet to be determined, Crisostomo said. It lasted for almost an hour and damaged at least P9,000 worth of property.

However, several residents claimed that the abandoned hours was sometimes being used by some unidentified persons "for a pot session."

The fire was the second one to hit the city since the start of the new year.

The first fire occurred at around 12:10 a.m. on Jan. 1 and gutted part of a warehouse along Tanigue St., Dagat-dagatan, Caloocan City.

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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

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Juvic, 9 others set out for big Tour mission

By Jong Arcano

LURED BY THE BIG MONEY AT stake in this year's Asian Tour, Juvic Pagunsan and Artemio Murakami will join eight other full-fledged Filipino professionals in the 2006 Qualifying School starting this week in Malaysia.

The mission will not be that easy, though, for Pagunsan and company.

The 10 Filipinos are among a record 600 entries from all over the world vying for a minimum of 40 slots in a two-part qualifying process to be conducted in two different courses in the next two weeks.

Also bidding for their Asian Tour membership cards this season are Cassius Casas, Tony Lascuña, Jerome Delariarte, Cookie La'O, Benjie Magada, Robert Pactolerin, Mars Pucay and Marlon Dizon.

All 10 RP bets, however, need not go through Stage One at the Palm Resort Golf and Country Club in Senai, Johor and Tanjong Puteri Golf and Country Club in Pasir Gudang, Johor.

They will go straight to the all-important Final Stage which will be held at the Palm Resort from Jan. 11 to 14 where only the top 40 finishers and ties will gain access to this year's Tour proper, set to become the biggest in history.

The Asian Tour recently announced an unprecedented 32-leg season with a record total prize money of $23 million (P1.22 billion). Eight tournaments offer at least $1 million in total pot while six are in the $500,000 to $900,000 range.

The Philippine Open, tentatively set for May 25 to 28 in Cagayan de Oro City, carries just the minimum prize money of $200,000.

Pagunsan decided to turn pro after an illustrious amateur career which he capped by winning the individual gold and leading the Philippines to team victory in the SEA Games last month.

Murakami, meanwhile, will be playing in Malaysia after a failed bid in the Japan Tour qualifying where he reached the final stage only to quit midway due to the freezing weather.

Boy Blue Ocampo, who acts as tournament director for the qualifying school, said he has high hopes for the RP entries despite the very tight competition.

"It's going to be like a treasure hunt for everybody in this marathon series," Ocampo told the INQUIRER. "An Asian Tour card will be like gold that will give them a lot of opportunities."

The 40 survivors will join the 60 regular cardholders from last year's Tour, only two of whom are Filipino pros. They are Frankie Miñoza and Angelo Que.

PAGUNSAN: Moving on to a bigger stage. JUN RAPANAN

Very tough 'course' for SEA Games hero

By Musong R. Castillo

NOW, THIS ONE IS FOR FAMILY.

After reaping countless accolades for flag and country in a storied amateur career, Juvic Pagunsan flies to Malaysia this week to vie in the Asian Tour's Qualifying School and start playing for the future of his loved ones.

"I cannot ask for anything more as far as my amateur career is concerned," the 27-year-old Pagunsan told the INQUIRER in Filipino as he took a break in practice at Calatagan in Batangas yesterday.

"I think I've served my country well and I'm not getting any younger. It's time to take the next step and hope to land in the bigger (professional) tours in the future."

It's no secret that Juvic adores his 5-year-old daughter LJ, whom he says is his inspiration.

"She's the reason why I wake up early in the morning to be in the range or in the fairways hitting shots," the former bag-toter at Binitin in Bacolod said. "I want to give her the best life possible, that's why I work so hard."

For finishing tied for fifth in the World Amateurs in Puerto Rico in November 2004 and tying for 15th in the Nomura Cup in Japan last year, the Asian Tour has seeded Pagunsan into the final stage of qualifying on Jan. 11-14.

Pagunsan will play as an amateur so as not lose his direct seeding. If he makes it among the top 40 players, he would then apply for a pro license.

Pagunsan won national tournaments in Malaysia and Thailand and scored a breakthrough in the Philippine amateur after eight fruitless tries. He was the low amateur in the tough Philippine Open at Malarayat and also hoisted the championship trophies in the DHL Amateurs and the Canlubang Am Open.

Not bad for someone who griped about the shabby treatment he received from some golf officials at the start of last year and threatened to abandon the RP squad.

Ex-Sri Lanka champ leads RP Ladies Open field

FIVE YEARS AFTER ROUTING THE FIELD TO become the first Sri Lankan winner of the Philippine Ladies Amateur Open, Thuhachinii Selvaratnam is coming back to shoot for another victory on Jan. 11-13 at the Manila Golf Club.

The 28-year-old Selvaratnam, a native of Colombo who won by eight strokes on her first try in 2000, banners a big roster of 28 foreign entries from seven countries due for the 44th staging of the three-day championship.

Selavratnam will be up against a youth-laden field many of whom are just in their late teens. They include Woo Young Kyung, last year's runner-up who will lead a potent six-player challenge from Korea.

Other foreign nations represented in the event organized by the Women's Golf Association of the Philippines are England, United States, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Singapore, which is sending its national team.

The tourney, however, will be without reigning titlist Jayvie Agojo and 2004 champion Frances Bondad.

Agojo, the Pepperdine University scholar who won a silver medal in the SEA Games, and Bondad both begged off due to academic pressures especially since they've lost a lot of school time during their SEAG campaign.

SELVARATNAM

Looming as a possible threat to the Sri Lankan is Cristina Corpus, a Fil-American jungolfer from San Leandro California with handicap of +0.7.

The local challenge will be carried by former champion Carmelette Villaroman, Lora Roberto, Crystal Superal, Lucy Landicho, Paulina Sotto and the de Villa sisters, Debbie and Linnel.

Nancy Ortiga, president of WGAP, said that despite the absence of Agojo and Bondad, she still expects an exciting battle for the trophy.

The sponsors are First Gentleman Foundation, Phil. Charity Sweepstakes, PSC, Banco de Oro Private Banking, Pacific Online, Gilberto M. Duavit, Golden Donuts, Electrobus, Keystone Lamps, Crucible Gallery, All Transport Network, Carlos Palanca and Hyatt Hotels.

For inquiries, please call the Manila Golf Club ladies locker room or 0917-5295324.

Johnson tries to weave old magic for Beermen

By June Navarro

KWAN JOHNSON HAS A KNACK FOR BAILING out San Miguel Beer every time the Beermen hit rock-bottom.

After ending the classification round with back-to-back losses, the Beermen are reactivating Johnson from the injury roster for their survivor playoff against the Coca-Cola Tigers in the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference.

Johnson sat out SMB's last two games due to a leg injury he suffered after leading the Beermen to a five-game win stretch, a feat no other import has pulled off so far.

Sidelined for more than a week, Johnson was replaced by Kevin Freeman, who was sent home following those twin setbacks.

The 6-foot-3 Johnson took over from Rico Hill and helped the Beermen climb to 6-8 after a 1-7 start.

Before winning five straight games for his team, Johnson also led San Miguel to the 2003 reinforced conference finals against the Tigers after the Beermen opened the conference at 0-5.

"It's still possible but it's going to be tough," said San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico of his chances of defending the crown.

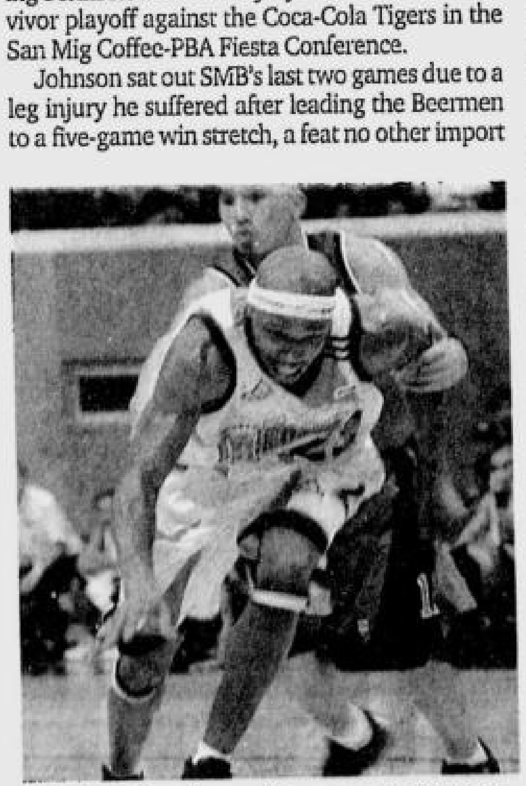
Armed with a twice-to-beat advantage, the eighth-seeded Beermen will need all the luck and magic Johnson could weave over the ninth-ranked Tigers when they dispute a seat in the best-of-three wildcard phase.

Meanwhile, Talk 'N Text is contemplating on replacing Damien Cantrell with a reliable source revealing that a member of the team's coaching staff is set to fly to the United States to find another import.

"The locals have to play good for him (Cantrell) to play good. That's our problem with him," said a team source who requested anonymity.

"That has not been the case with the other teams, where the locals can play bad but the import could still give them a lift. That's the kind of import that we need," he added.

Roger Powell Jr., a former University of Illinois star, was mentioned as a possible replacement but team scouts said the 6-foot-6, 235-pound forward is still seeing action with the Rockford Lightning in the US CBA.



JOHNSON makes another grand return for San Miguel Beer. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

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Alcantara tops 14-under Asian Masters

ALCANTARA lifts his Asian Masters trophy.

FILIPINO FRANCIS CASEY ALCANTARA CAPTURED the boys' singles crown of the Asian 14-under Masters at the Melbourne Park in Australia as Philippine tennis started the new year on a high note last weekend.

Seeded only sixth in the tournament, the 13-year-old Alcantara dumped Sitaram Sudanwa of India, 6-2, 6-4, in the finals.

It was sweet revenge for the Cagayan de Oro native, who lost to the same Indian in the quarterfinals of the Asian 14-and-under championship in New Delhi, India, last November.

"I am very happy to win the Masters especially at the home of the Australian Open," said Alcantara. "Hopefully, I can continue to win in Sydney as well."

The Asian boys' and girls' teams, composed of the top 16 finishers in the tough Asian 14-and-under circuit, will play in the Australian 14 and Under Nationals in Sydney starting on Wednesday. The tournament is both a team and individual event.

The team will return to Melbourne next week for the Ambassador's Cup.

On the way to the finals, Alcantara finished the round-robin stage with a 2-1 card, winning over Abdulnour Bruno of Syria, 6-2, 6-4, and Tito Hutauruk of Indonesia, 6-1, 6-2, before losing to Sudanwa, 1-6, 7-5, 2-6.

In the semifinals, Alcantara was on the court for only seven games as top seed Chumpetch Pattrayu of India retired due to an injury.

The retirement set up Alcantara for a winner-take-all match with Sudanwa whom the Filipino finally beat after three meetings.

The Asian team of 16 members is fully sponsored by the Australian Open under a joint development program with the Asian Tennis Federation.

Meanwhile, Fil-American Denise Dy opened her new season with aplomb last weekend when she qualified in three Australian Summer Junior Circuit tournaments, including the Australian Open Juniors Championship in Melbourne.

The tournament, a Grade A championship of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) and a side event of the Australian Open, set Jan. 23 to 29, will cap her three-event stint in Australia.

The 15-year-old Dy, a member of the bronze medal-winning RP team in the last Southeast Asian Games, will start her Australian sojourn by competing in the Loy Yang Power Traralgon International, an ITF Grade 1 Tournament, in Victoria on Jan. 6 to 11.

This will be followed by another Grade 1 event, the Optus Nottinghill International on Jan. 15 to 21.

Dy is ranked No. 93 in the world by the ITF.

PSC plans free education for nat'l athletes, coaches

By Jasmine W. Payo

FREE EDUCATION FOR THE NATIONal athletes and coaches will be the priority of the Philippine Sports Commission at the start of the year, PSC chair Butch Ramirez announced yesterday.

"Our immediate plan and one of the very big things for us this year is the launch of the Philippine Institute of Sports," said Ramirez.

"The first phase of the institute's program will be focused on short courses and lectures for the coaches and athletes," he added. "After that, during the second phase in 2007, we plan to offer two-year and four-year degree courses on sports sciences. We'll be offering scholarships to our athletes."

The Philippine Institute of Sports, located at the Philsports Complex in Pasig City, will be unveiled on Feb. 15.

The pioneering venture aims to restructure the national sports program through concrete projects such as talent identification, athletes' career education, coaches' education program and formal accreditation of coaches, among others.

"We had a survey that most of our athletes don't get to finish school," said Ramirez. "The coaches and athletes' general education will be the start, the catalyst. If we have bright coaches and bright programs, we'll have bright athletes."

Ramirez added that foreign educators from the Victorian Institute of Sports in Melbourne, Australia, will be tapped to lecture on sports medicine, management and administration.

MEMBERS of the national teams will soon put their hands together for an education plan to help them when they retire. AP

"This is all part of the Australian-Philippine sports linkages," he said. "We also have linkages with China and Russia."

During the institute's launch, Ramirez will also be meeting with nearly 300 regional sports heads and selected school athletic directors to discuss PSC's five-year sports master plan, the "RP Unified Sports Program."

"It's a collaborative effort among different government agencies and we'll be discussing the schedule of our projects," said Ramirez.

The master plan, which Ramirez recently presented , tasked the Department of Education to work on the sports development and talent identification program at the grassroot level; the Commission on Higher Education on the training pool candidates from tertiary school competitions; and the Department of Interior and Local Government on the identification of elite athletes from the Philippine national games.

PSC also recently identified its major targets in the next three years—five to 10 gold medals in the 2006 Asian Games; at least 75 golds in the 2007 Southeast Asian Games and the country's first gold in the 2008 Olympics.

Germans confident of reaching WC finals

BERLIN—HOST GERMANY IS SO CONvinced it will reach the World Cup final in July that it has already booked hotel accomodation in Berlin, manager Jurgen Klinsmann has said.

"I am convinced that it will be a tremendous World Cup," Klinsmann told Monday's edition of Bild newspaper in an interview.

"We have already booked our hotel rooms in Berlin. We will go all the way because we saw during the Confederation Cup that we are getting the balance of the team right."

The former international striker has been the subject of heavy criticism over his decision to continue to live in the United States, his indecision over which goalkeeper to select and his tactical plans.

Right on track

But he insists that everything is right on track.

"We are sure we are on course and we will use the next few months to fine-tune things. We will then be very difficult to beat," he said.

"It will be an especially important year for Germany," Klinsmann added "because it will be another 40 or 50 years before we once again play host to the World Cup."

Meanwhile, Japan's perennial lack of firepower stands in the way of World Cup glory, according to national coach Zico.

The Asian champions, who struggled through their World Cup qualifiers with some unconvincing performances, have been drawn in Group F with five-time champion and holder Brazil, European powerhouse Croatia and Australia.

'Strong possibility'

"Our first target is to advance from the first round to the knockout stage and I feel there is a strong possibility," Zico said in a New Year interview with Japanese media.

Asked about what his players should improve in the five months before the World Cup finals in Germany, the 52-year-old Brazilian said: "If I have to name one, it is the precison of finishing.

"The Japanese national team can create quite decisive chances against any team but they can hardly get the final jobs done to score goals," he said.

He pointed to some encouraging results in 2005, including a 1-0 win over European champions Greece and a 2-2 draw against Brazil at the Confederations Cup. AFP

Taekwondo chasing first Asian Games gold

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TAEKWONDO, ONE OF THE FRONTRUNNERS for the "Chosen 10" roster of Olympic sports, is bracing itself for a heavy schedule in a bid to win its first Asian Games gold medal late this year.

National head coach Stephen Fernandez yesterday said the Philippine Taekwondo Association is focusing its attention on a breakthrough win in the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, but the Olympic stint will always be its priority following the team's impressive performances in the last two Olympiads in Sydney and Athens.

"We are hoping to make it (among the Chosen 10)," said Fernandez, who competed in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics when taekwondo was a demonstration sport.

Aside from taekwondo, boxing and diving are practically assured of making it to the list of 10 sports that will be heavily funded based on instructions by President Macapagal-Arroyo in a bid to produce the country's first Olympic gold medal.

The composition of the 10 chosen sports, however, has yet to be discussed by the Philippine Olympic Committee, the Philippine Sports Commission and the NSAs.

Fernandez said that the national pool will be formed after the Carlos Palanca Jr. Cup in February.

"Mr. Hong (Sung-Chon, the Philippine Taekwondo Association vice president) is expected to draw up our plans for this year, but off hand the CPJ Cup will be among the first national tournaments we will hold," said Fernandez.

Competitions up ahead for the RP jins are the Asian championships in Bangkok, the Southeast Asian Taekwondo Union in Vietnam and the Korean Open.

The Philippines, he said, might skip the World Cup this year because of its new team competition format that put the country at a disadvantage due to its lack of heavyweight and middleweight bets.

"The Asian Games will be our focal point this year because we still have to win our first gold there," said Fernandez of the Asiad, whose caliber measures up to that of the Olympics because of the presence of superpowers South Korea, Iran and even China.

The best the country could achieve in the Asian Games were silver medals through Bobby Vargas and Jon Abratique. Monsour Del Rosario also won a bronze in the Asiad, according to Fernandez.

Starting it right

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

SINCE I WANTED TO START THE YEAR right, I worked on the first day of 2006. Thus, this piece you are reading now.

Unlike most sports stars I write about who also must rest this time of the year, there's no respite for me in this job I had learned to love since I embraced it professionally in 1974.

As always, no, you hear no plaints here, now and forever.

So, had to write this one Jan. 1 in the hope of greeting the New Year the politically, if not financially, correct way. It could mean the effort would make me work the rest of the year. And that would be just fine with me for one reason or another.

I'm used to working my butt off since I was a kid anyways, having come from a family that isn't as rich as the Ayalas, Lopezes, Cojuangcos or even the Rockefellers.

In my time and in the present station I am in, you don't work, you don't eat.

Bluntly put, I don't work, my family won't eat.

I don't write and there won't be food on the table.

I have no other business but writing. Writing is a business I've known for decades, and that's not to include the years of writing I had spent both in high school and college as a campus journalist. Whether I was doing it right or not all these years, well, that remains to be seen. In this space, it's been always you, fellas, whom I lean on, cling to, for assurance, if not confirmation.

For sure, I know that writing is a business. If I hadn't been doing it right from the day I first came out here in 1986, you be the judge —as always.

Do I know how to write?

There'd always be "rejectionists" as well as "affirmationists."

I know who the "rejectionists" are, the so-called non-believers in me. They could number by the thousands. Again, as always, not to worry as the wings of words have to remain unruffled or you won't survive in this cruel business. I respect them that much for I have always believed in the columnist's dictum that you can't please everybody.

Bottom line for me always is, after having finished writing a column, have I done the piece as honestly and as truthfully as I could in the best of my ability? And, having said that, did not also a drop of blood, aside from a bead of sweat, cascade down from the temple while in the course of writing the opus?

One can only suffer while writing. If not, that's not writing at all. As Nick Joaquin once said, "There's no crazier person on Earth than the writer, for the writer can sit for hours by just trying to write."

I've been asked a lot of times already: "When are you going to retire?"

My usual answer is, "I guess, even as many of my subjects in sports have long retired, not me. I can never retire."

Journalists may retire but not writers. We may not be stuck to the world but, alas, we are to the word.

No word, no work.

* * *

FASTBREAK. The 9th APT Cup on Jan. 6, Friday, at The Orchard is another laudable golf event if only because the mulligan costing each player P400 goes to the caddies. Always, this much-awaited event cooked up by the indefatigable Art Tugade draws both celebrities and captains of industry nationwide. Cheers to the members of the organizing committee—Madel Martin, Mario Pangan, Louie Carreon, Nap Marigomen and Tugade himself. They've been doing a wonderful job putting the tournament together. And, of course, I raise a glass, too, to Rolly Enriquez, whose passion for excellence might yet make his Superman Team the surprise package of the tournament. Cheers!

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

Saulog rules again

MULTITITLED JOVIE SAULOG rediscovered his old brilliance when he emerged as the 125cc invitational motocross champion for 2005.

Flaunting anew the power of his brand-new Yamaha YZF, Saulog outdueled veteran campaigner Glen Aguilar and Kenneth San Andres to capture top honors in the 125 cc category of the annual series sanctioned by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa).

"I'm proud of my achievements (in 2005). *Talagang pinilit kong manalo uli para na din sa aking mga kaibigan na walang sawang sumusuporta* (I tried hard not to disappoint my supporters)," said Saulog, nicknamed "Mr. Just Got Lucky" during his long and colorful career in motocross.

"Hopefully, I'll have a more fruitful campaign this year," added Saulog, who rose to prominence when he bagged the national motocross championship in 1985.

This year, Saulog edged both Aguilar and San Andres in the seven-part series organized by MP Turbo of motorsports legend Mike Potenciano in different parts of the country.

BACK IN THE LIMELIGHT is many-time national motocross champion Jovie Saulog. PDI PHOTO

Jon Rellosa of Bicol also used a Yamaha YZ to capture the overall title in the 85cc junior category.

Wade, Shaq lead Heat past listless T'wolves

MIAMI—DWYANE WADE SCORED 19 POINTS AND MIAMI USED a big third quarter to pull away to a 97-70 victory over Minnesota on Sunday night.

Shaquille O'Neal had 16 points for Miami, which allowed a season low in points, set a season high for margin of victory and held the Timberwolves to their lowest point total this season.

James Posey had 11 points for the Heat, who moved to a season-high six games over .500 (19-13).

Wally Szczerbiak scored 19 points and Kevin Garnett matched a season low with 11 for Minnesota, which has won two of its last 10 games but remains atop the Midwest Division.

Miami outscored Minnesota 25-6 in the opening 7:30 of the third quarter, turning a three-point halftime deficit into a 66-50 lead.

Wade had nine points in the run and O'Neal added six.

Cipppers 100, Blazers 94

At Portland, Oregon, Elton Brand had 20 points and 11 rebounds and the Clippers snapped a losing streak at the Rose Garden that dated to 1999.

The Clippers had lost 12 straight in Portland since an 89-83 win on April 11, 1999, and 26 of 29 since the start of the 1991-92 season.

After getting off to a 10-5 start this November, the Clippers went 6-7 in December, wrapping up the month with a 111-92 loss to Boston on Saturday.

Cuttino Mobley had 23 points for the Clippers and Sam Cassell added 22.

Jazz 98, Lakers 94

At Los Angeles, Andrei Kirilenko scored 23 points, Keith McLeod scored four of his 15 points in the final 78 seconds and Utah took full advantage of Kobe Bryant's suspension.

Bryant was suspended for two games without pay by the NBA after committing a flagrant foul against Mike Miller during last Wednesday's loss to Memphis.

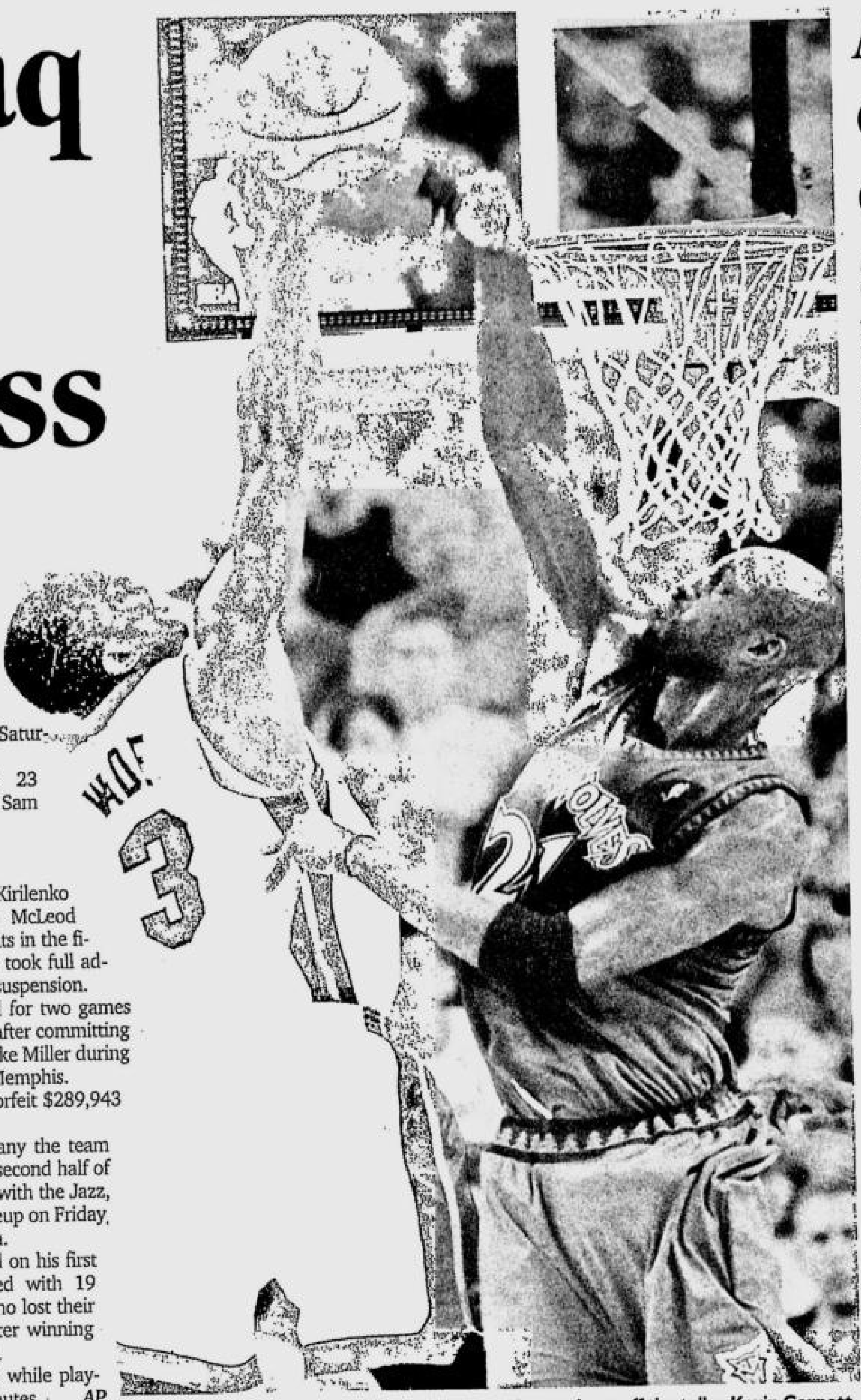
The Lakers' star will forfeit $289,943 in salary.

Bryant won't accompany the team to Salt Lake City for the second half of the home-and-home set with the Jazz, but will return to the lineup on Friday night to face Philadelphia.

Brian Cook connected on his first eight shots and finished with 19 points for the Lakers, who lost their fourth straight game after winning nine of their previous 11.

The finished 8-for-10 while playing a season-high 40 minutes. *AP*

• *Solar Sports will telecast the Seattle vs. Indiana game "live" at 8 a.m. today.*



MIAMI spitfire Dwayne Wade uses his spring to shoot off the taller Kevin Garnett of the Minnesota Timberwolves in Sunday's game in Miami. AP

Aide to Viet coach sacked over SEAG soccer scam

HANOI—AN ASSISTANT TO VIETNAM'S NAtional football coach has been sacked by a top club after being accused of failing to stem alleged match-fixing during the recent Southeast Asian Games, an official said Monday.

The Danang club in the central city on Thursday terminated its contract with Le Thuy Hai, one of three assistants to Alfred Riedl of Austria, said club president Bui Xuan Hoa.

"Our decision takes effect immediately. His contract would have run until July 2006," Hoa said.

Hai has faced bitter attacks in state media as police began investigating allegations that some Vietnamese players had sought to arrange the scores during the Games in the Philippines in early December.

The scandal has already led to the arrest of four players of the Under 23 team and the resignation of Vietnam Football Federation vice president, Le The Tho.

Many other players and officials are being questioned over the accusations of attempts to fix some matches at the request of betting syndicates.

Hai was sacked for "not having carried out his responsibilities in management and education of players in the Danang club who took part in negative acts" during the games, said the popular daily Sports Vietnam.

"Mr. Hai has seriously hurt the reputation of Danang football club and of the city as a whole among fans and sponsors," it said.

Other state newspapers accused him of making "irresponsible and arrogant" statements about the match-fixing allegations when they first emerged.

Hai had only taken over as an assistant coach just before the SEA Games, after the sacking of Nguyen Thanh Vinh. Vinh was arrested in November over allegations of match-fixing in at least one match of the national professional V-League in April.

Vietnamese football has been under intense scrutiny for months, with police investigating fraud allegations implicating some 90 referees and coaches.

The scandal over the under-23 team is considered the worst crisis gripping the game in the football-mad communist nation since 1975. *AFP*

I was framed in '88, claims Ben Johnson

JOHNSON

LONDON—DISGRACED CANAdian sprinter Ben Johnson said on Sunday that he had been framed when he tested positive for anabolic steroids after winning the 100 meters gold medal in the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Johnson added that he was still considered the fastest man in the world when he ran 9.79 seconds to win the title—it was subsequently erased from the record books once he was found to have cheated.

However, Johnson told the BBC that he hadn't taken the drugs.

"People can put things in your food and drinks to sabotage you, like they did to me in Seoul in 1988," said Johnson, who was banned for life when he again tested positive in March 1993 having already served a ban for his positive test in Seoul.

"I'm not a cheat—I do what I am supposed to do to win.

"I'm not saying go ahead and take it (drugs), but it's not a crime. It's just in some sports it's banned, some it isn't.

"Most of my people here in Canada and in the world still look at me as the fastest man in the world. They say I'm the fastest ever, dead or alive."

Johnson, who went on to become personal fitness trainer for Diego Maradona and Libyan leader Colonel Moamer Kadhafi's son Al-Saadi, said that there were plenty of people willing to ruin other athletes careers and the number of sportspeople taking drugs was enormous.

"People are evil. They will do anything to get rid of someone from the sport," he said.

"I don't want to get myself in trouble, but I would say 40 percent of people in sports are using performance-enhancing drugs.

"You would be surprised to see the great players of the past who retired doing stuff."

Simon Clegg, chief executive of the British Olympic Association, hit out at Johnson's comments.

"I do not accept the figures that Johnson has said. I think that is totally ridiculous," he told the BBC.

"We have a very good record, particularly in this country, of running a high-quality anti-doping program that ensures that cheats are caught and that athletes are aware of the medical downsides of taking banned substances." *AFP*

Seles also planning a comeback

SYDNEY—NINE-TIME GRAND SLAM WINner Monica Seles is planning a comeback, buoyed by the success of players like Mary Pierce and Kim Clijsters who have returned to the top 10 after overcoming injuries.

Seles, 32, hasn't played since the 2003 French Open, held back by a broken bone in her right foot which still gives her trouble.

But after watching her friend Pierce make two Grand Slam finals last year, Seles believes she too can return and take on today's superstars.

"What Mary has achieved is nothing short of amazing. If she can come back from all her injuries and do so well, then I think why can't I?" she told the Australian Tennis magazine.

"After all, we're the same age and go back years and years. *AFP*

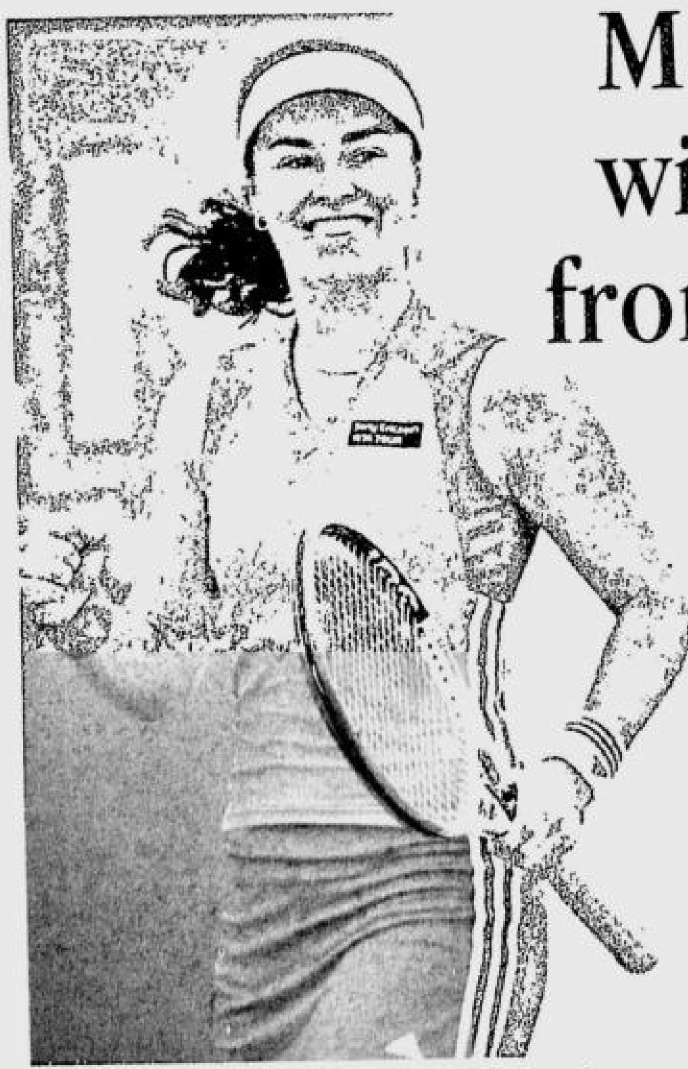
Hopman Cup: Dutch down Argentinians

PERTH, AUSTRALIA—PETER WESSELS BEAT former French Open champion Gaston Gaudio of Argentina 6-2, 7-6 (5) Monday to give the Netherlands a 2-0 winning lead in its Hopman Cup mixed teams tennis match.

Earlier, Michaella Krajicek gave the Netherlands, which had to qualify for the tournament by beating China last Friday, a 1-0 lead with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Gisela Dulko.

In mixed doubles, Dulko and Gaudio beat Krajicek and Wessels 4-6, 6-3, 10-5—the last set in a match tiebreaker—to make the final score 2-1 for the Netherlands.

Sweden played Serbia-Montenegro in a match later Monday. On Tuesday, Russia plays its first match against the United States, 1-0, while Australia, 0-1, plays the Netherlands. *AP*



FORMER world No. 1 Martina Hingis still plays to the gallery like no other on her return to active competition. AFP

Martina makes winning return from retirement

GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA—MARTINA HINGIS MADE a successful return to competitive tennis Monday after a three-year absence, beating Maria Vento-Kabchi of Venezuela 6-2, 6-1 at the Australian women's hardcourt championships.

The 25-year-old Hingis, winner of five Grand Slam singles titles, made a nervous start when both players exchanged service breaks. But the former world No. 1 from Switzerland, showing no signs of an extended layoff due to chronic foot injuries, outplayed her opponent for the rest of the match.

Tournament spokesperson Eloise Tyson said Hingis appeared to be free from injury at the end of the match.

Hingis also plans to play in next week's Sydney International on a wild card and the Australian Open at Melbourne beginning Jan. 16, a tournament she has won three times.

It was Hingis' first tour match since a loss to Elena Dementieva in Filderstadt, Germany, in October 2002.

Hingis will take on seventh-seeded Klara Koukalova of the Czech Republic in the second round.

"I was a little nervous," Hingis told the sold-out Royal Pines stadium after the match.

"I'd like to thank my family and friends for supporting me." *AP*

Pele punched schoolmate who gave him his nickname

BERLIN—PELE ALWAYS SAID HE WAS unhappy with his name. Now he says he slugged the schoolmate who gave him it.

The former Brazil great was born Edson Arantes do Nascimento, but became better known by his nickname. Pele said Sunday he hated it so much he flipped out, earning a two-day school suspension.

"I didn't want that name. In Portuguese, Pele sounds like baby talk," Pele said. "Edson, in contrast, sounds like Edison, the inventor of the light bulb. But a schoolmate wanted to make me angry by calling me 'Pele.' First I glared at him, then I hit him."

Pele said he now feels grateful to the schoolmate for the nickname.

"The good thing is that people can easily say Pele all over the world. With Edson, the Asians would have problems," he said. "Over the years, I've learned to live with two persons in my heart. One is Edson, who has fun with his friends and family; the other is the football player Pele."

Pele, now aged 65, is regarded as the greatest ever player. He won the World Cup with Brazil in 1958, 1962 and 1970. AP

Panthers nail playoff berth

PHILADELPHIA—JOE GIBBS AND THE WAshington Redskins are back in the playoffs.

Clinton Portis ran for 112 yards and two touchdowns, leading the Redskins to a hard-fought 31-20 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday.

Washington (10-6) clinched the NFL's final playoff spot and its first postseason berth since 1999 with its fifth straight win. The victory also eliminated Dallas from contention.

The Redskins play Tampa Bay (11-5) in an NFC wild-card game next Saturday in their first playoff game since losing 14-13 to the Buccaneers in a second-round matchup six years ago.

Mike McMahon threw two touchdown passes to Reggie Brown as Philadelphia (6-10) completed its first losing season since '99 after reaching the Super Bowl last February.

Panthers 44, Falcons 11

At Atlanta, DeShaun Foster rushed for 165 yards and Jake Delhomme threw for two touchdowns. *AP*

PANTHERS' Steve Smith (89) reaches for the end zone after making a catch as Falcons' Ronnie Heard defends in Atlanta, Sunday. AP

Horseracing sets record sales

Philracom rakes in P9B as Dilag sees more fruitful year ahead

By Musong R. Castillo

DILAG: Can be done

THE HORSERACING INDUSTRY GENERATED SALES of close to P9 billion last year which earned the government about P1.4 billion in taxes.

The record sales translated into racetracks revenues of a combined P350 million and encouraged racehorse owners, who look forward to even better times this year.

That total amount broke last year's record by more than P300 million, according to Philippine Racing Commission (Philracom) chair Jimmy Dilag.

Dilag said the increased sales was a result of balanced races in both race tracks at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite, and at Santa Ana Park in Makati, strategically situated off-track stations and the trust that the racing public has given the leaders of the industry.

"We expect to come close to the P10 billion mark next year," Dilag, also a topnotch breeder, told the INQUIRER.

"Though we did well this year, we could have sustained the 10 percent growth of each of the last two years if not for the illegal bookies."

Dilag, serving his fourth year as Philracom's top man, said the bookies made a killing last year but he vowed to address this concern together with the Games and Amusements Board led by its chair Eric Buhain.

Nothing much will change in the Philracom's busy calendar of races starting this month, but Dilag said the prizes will be raised.

Premium stakes races such as the Triple Crown, the Presidential Gold Cup will dangle winners' purses of up to P1.2 million, he said.

"This can be done because the government has been backing up the industry," Dilag said. "Even several congressmen have taken an interest in horseracing and are helping (the industry)."

The industry closed the year on a high note by holding the 2005 Santa Ana Championship Race at the Makati racetrack, with Fernando Raquel Jr. guiding the heavily backed Wild Orchid to a handsome six-length victory. The victory, the three-year-old bay filly's 12th in 19 career starts, was worth P500,000 for owner Ed Moreno.

SPORTSWATCH

Busy sked at LP Coliseum

A SPECIAL 3-COCK DERBY THIS THURSDAY which has attracted 50 entries kicks off a busy schedule at the Las Piñas Coliseum this year. Former mayor Nene Aguilar, the derby host, will donate part of proceeds to the city's Clean and Green project. Coliseum manager Alex Tobias said the derby, featuring top cockers from Metro Manila and nearby provinces, will be held instead of the cancelled Pamigay Premyo 6-Cock Annual Derby. Submission of entries is on derby day, from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. For inquiries, call 873-1040 or 874-3910. The venue will also present its version of the Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan on Jan. 16, with P500,000 at stake.

GCAP weighs cocks today

A 5-COCK DERBY, THE FIRST BIG DERBY AT the San Juan Coliseum, kicks off on Thursday with more than 70 fights on tap and Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. Participants will submit their entries today at the SJC office, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 722-7366 or 725-5369. Seeing action are members of the Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) as well as guest participants from Davao, Cebu, Negros Occidental, Iloilo, Isabela, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales and Nueva Ecija.

P7M staked in Iloilo derby

A WHOPPING CASH POT OF P7 MILLION IS at stake in the Thunderbird Power Feeds-sponsored 2006 Candelaria 7-Cock Derby slated Jan. 29 to Feb. 2 at the Iloilo Coliseum in Jaro town. The derby will be staged in conjunction with the Feast of the Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria. Entry fee in the 39th edition of the derby is P48,000 with the minimum bet pegged at P22,000. Hosted by Chito Tinsay, assisted by The Iloilo Sportsmen Inc., the Candelaria derby has lured foreign cockers and breeders from the United States.

RACING TIPS

Top Choice (Edgar Mendez)

Race 1—(Quartet/ Trifecta)—Xabregas (8), Chabacana (6), Sutter's Quest (1), Alias Abrakadabra (7)
Race 2—(Pentafecta/ Trifecta)—Silver Eagle/Cash Mc Call (30, Sovereign Dancer (9), Vhingget (7), Music Quest (10), Shifty (4)
Race 3—(Pentafecta/Trifecta)—Better Strike/ Brown Carpet (8), Field Star (1), Real Tough (5), Uncle Buck/ Tervalac (2), Manhattan (5)
Race 4—(Super Six/Trifecta)—Raven (5), Ocean Cookie (8), American Inggo (7), Macho Guwapito (9), Cool Operator (11), Tribeca (3)
Race 5—(Pentafecta/Trifecta)—Red Phoenix/All Class (5), Sound Of The Wind (6), Real Charm (2), Feng Shui (7), Express Strike (9)
Race 6—(Quartet/Trifecta)—Puppy Dog Tail (5), Teetotal (7), Tout Eat Grace (6), Southern Charm (4)
Race 7—(Super Six/Trifecta)—Long Hitter (9), Beat D'Heat (2), Dulce My Love (10), Secret Quest (3), Strong Colony (5), Rose And Toy (5)
Race 8—Quartet/Trifecta—Sometime Soon (6), JJ'S Friend (5), Jet'Aime (1), Las Española (2)
Race 9—Super Six/Quartet/Trifecta)—Money Maker (10), Presidentiable (2), Golden Issue (13), Mesmerize (7), Gelay's Charm (1), En Carta (5)

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BOULDERING WINNERS Junjun Vidal of the Philippines (center) takes the gold in the men's bouldering category in the Quezon City International Climbing Open held recently at the Amoranto Sports Complex. Runner-up Suko Budianto (left) of Indonesia and third placer Miel Pahati, another Filipino, share the podium with Vidal. Event host QC Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista and Joey Cuerdo of the organizing Scapi awarded the medals to the top finishers. The QC Sports Council supports new sports, including sport climbing, involving the youth.

Bardon fights for Paba title Jan. 10

SAN CARLOS CITY'S JOJO BARDON will get a crack at the Pan-Asian Boxing Association (Paba) flyweight crown of Thai champion Denkaosan Kaovichit on Jan. 10 in Thailand.

Bardon, who failed in an earlier bid to win the Philippine junior fly title against Sonny Boy Jaro of Silay City, will be coming in as a huge underdog in his bid to unseat Kaovichit, who is a one-time WBA flyweight challenger and a long-time Paba flyweight boss.

Kaovichit holds a record of 32 wins, one loss with 14 KOs, while Bardon has 13 wins, nine losses, one draw with eight KOs.

Bardon, a protege of Rex "Wakee" Salud, is on a three-bout winning streak and is reportedly in tremendous shape for the fight. He stopped Rolly Mandahinog last November following earlier wins over Japanese Yasuyuki Kodama and Jun Eballe.

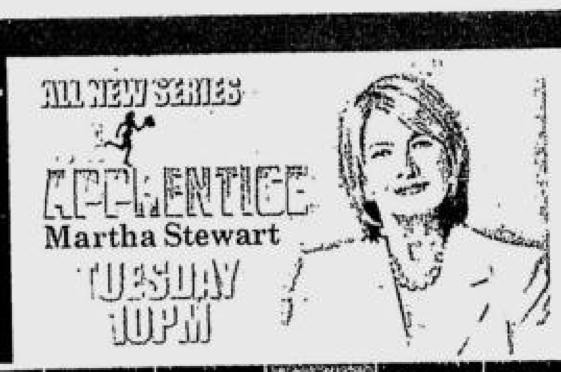
Kaovichit will be facing his 13th Filipino opponent in Bardon, and is expected to keep his championship belt.

Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor

INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Tuesday, January 3, 2006

ALL NEW SEASON
THE APPRENTICE
SEE IT FIRST ON
ABC
MONDAY 10PM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ABC 5			Winner TV Shopping		World Pool Masters				Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	ABC Action Movies				Big News	The Apprentice		Ali	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Little Amy	Mr Bean	Naruto	Amazing Twins	Meteor Garden Season 2	TV Patrol World	Pilipinas Game KNB?	Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Only You	Vietnam Rose	Pinoy Big Brother	Bora			Insider
AXN		CSI Crime Scene Investigation (Season 4)		CSI Crime Scene Investigation (Season 4)		The 4400		PSI Factor (Season III)		24		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Worlds Apart		House		Las Vegas	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Powerpuff Girls	Tom & Jerry Show	Accelerators GP			The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Battle B-Daman	Machine Robo-Rescue	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Jack	Justice League	Static Shock	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers
Cinemax	The Private Navy Of Sgt. O'Farrell			And Justice For All (4:15 PM)				Real Genius (6:15 PM)				Beverly Hills Cop			Who's Your Daddy? (9:45 PM)				Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Disney Channel	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Sabrina The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Phil Of The Future	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN						College Football Bowl Game '05 Outback Bowl						Sportscenter Asia	College Football Bowl Game '05 Fiesta Bowl						Sportscenter Asia
ETC		Good Morning Mom	Knock First	1 Hr Edited Version Of Today Show		Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	JKX	Simple Life	One Tree Hill		For Love Or Money		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
EWTN	Catholic Social Teaching	Angelus (3:15 PM)	ABCatholic	Angel Force	Angels Of God	Rosary With Mother Angelica	The Gospel Of John	EWTN Gallery	Lord Have Mercy	The Journey Home Encore		Council Of Faith	Good Or Evil-Who Decides?	Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Rome Reports	Web Of Faith	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	Date With Tifany		Dragonball Z	Slam Dunk	Frog Prince	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Sugo	Etheria	Starstruck 3	Jewel In The Palace		Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched IV	McLeod's Daughters IV		HCA The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Who's The Boss	Bewitched IV	The Nanny III	Changi		Judging Amy		Life On Liberty Street			Family Law (10:35PM)		Strong Medicine
HBO			Grind			[illegible] (5:15 PM)				Coming To America				Rome Ep 07: Pharsalus		Rome Ep 08: Caesarion		Elf	
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Home Shopping Network		ME TV					IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	Family Guy	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Beat The Geeks	WWE Bottomline		WWE Afterburn		X-Play	Banzai	Mad TV		Trigger Happy TV	Primetime Glick	South Park	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Ren & Stimpy Adult Party Cartoon	Family Guy	Wise Hat	
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fat	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	Second Look		Look For Less	Life & Style		Who's Wedding Is It Anyway?		Road & Track	Back To Basics
MTV Philippines	MTV Screen	Spring Break	Diyes		Punk'D	Pop Inc		MTV Hits				MTV Hits	Get Spotted	TRL		Advance Warning	Pimp My Ride	MTV Hits	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX Versions	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	MYXILOG	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Top Of The Pops	Radio MYX	MYX News	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX
National Geographic		Seconds From Disaster		Inside 911		Is It Real?		Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Seconds From Disaster		Is It Real?	
NBN		Value Vision		New Life TV Shopping		Teledyaryo	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo				Pilipinas Ngayon Na!		Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues/What Planet Are You From	Rugrats	Hey Arnold!	My Life As A Teenage Robot/ Right On Top	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	SpongeBob SquarePants	Fairly Odd Parents	All That	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	Drake & Josh	The Fairly Odd Parents	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Rocket Power	ChalkZone	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	The Brothers Garcia
PBO			Paano Tatakasan ang Bukas				Boda De Plata				Humanap Ka Ng Pangit				Paano Ang Kahapon Kung Wala Na Ang Ngayon				Dongalo Massacre
QTV		Bodyguard	Striker Hungry Heart	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Star	Hotelier	All In	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	My Guardian Baby		News On Q	Sana'y Muling Makapiling		Groupee TV	
RPN 9	TV Shopping		Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	As Told By Ginger	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Real Gilligan's Island		The Cut		Paradise Hotel		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Treat		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Sony Bmg Video			
Solar Sports		WTA 2005 Tour C'ships by LA Semi-Finals				IBF China Open Finals Men's Singles			JVC Interscholastic			Sportsdesk	NBA Jam	NBA Game Sonics @ Pacers					NBA Inside Stuff
Sports Plus		ACC Basketball St John's @ Virginia Tech				NFL 2005 Tennessee @ Jacksonville						Ultimate Fighting Championship				Party Poker.com World Open 2005			
Star Movies	The Unexpected Journey (2:20 PM)			Dogan (3:50 PM)			Bringing Out The Dead				Belly Of The Beast			Spartan				Dot The I (10:50PM)	
Star World	Becker	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Whose Line Is It Anyway?	Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol Special		Desperate Housewives		Tru Calling		Friends	American Idol Special
Studio 23		Astroboy						Get Backers	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	Andromeda		Smallville	Point Pleasant		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

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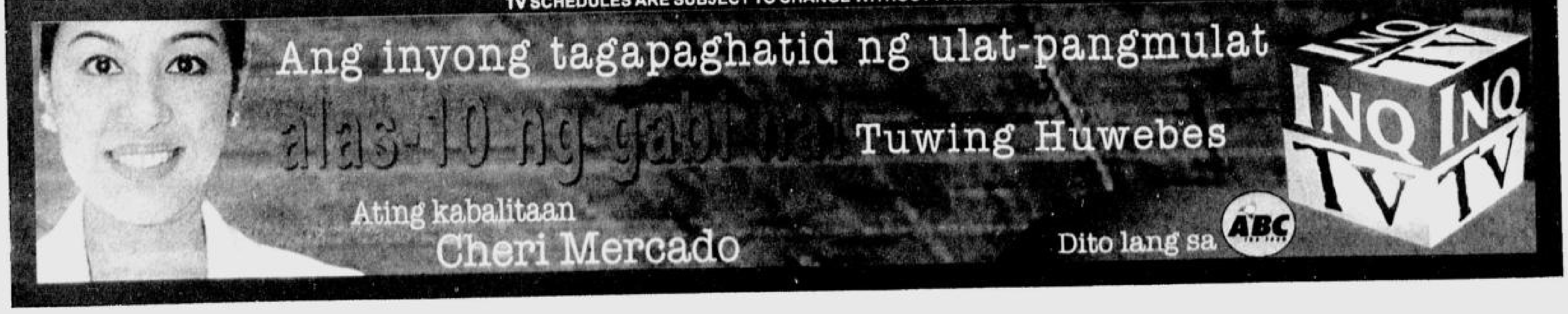
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Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

Mega wows Dubai

SHARON Cuneta onstage. Inset, KC and Kiko with a kiss for Mega.

INSIDE

■ Stars' goals this year /A2-2

■ MMFF musts /A2-3

Exclusive photos for INQUIRER Entertainment by Buddy de la Cruz and Mickey Muñez

IT WAS MEGASTAR SHARON Cuneta's first visit to Dubai—her first time in the Middle East, in fact—for a pre-Christmas performance at the 7,000-seater Dubai Aviation Club Stadium.

It was also the last stop in her 2005 concert tour that had taken her to Jacksonville in Florida, Chicago, Atlantic City, Reno, San Diego, Los Angeles, Hawaii and Guam.

Before embarking on the tour, Cuneta told INQUIRER Entertainment: "I heard great things about Dubai, Kuwait and the Middle East from my daughter KC's classmates and, of course, I loved the movie 'Dubai.'"

The Overseas Filipino Workers in the region were, needless to say, excited. According to the producers from ABS-CBN Middle East, TFC World Tours and Artist House: "Ticket sales were brisk and started moving as early as three months before the show date, with Pinoy ticket-buyers coming from as far away as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)."

Special guest was "Star in a Million" champ Erik Santos, a self-confessed Sharonian.

Also present were Mega's loved ones—mom Elaine Cuneta, husband Sen. Francis Pangilinan, babies Frankie and Miel, and eldest daughter KC Concepcion, who flew in from Paris to catch the show and do some serious shopping.

During the concert, the crowd's insistent requests for a song from KC resulted in mother and daughter doing a duet of "Ikaw."

Sharon has other dream destinations for the next tour. "I'd like to hold concerts in Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, France or Italy in Europe—actually, anywhere there's a Filipino."

ELSE WHERE

Two gay cowboys deliver

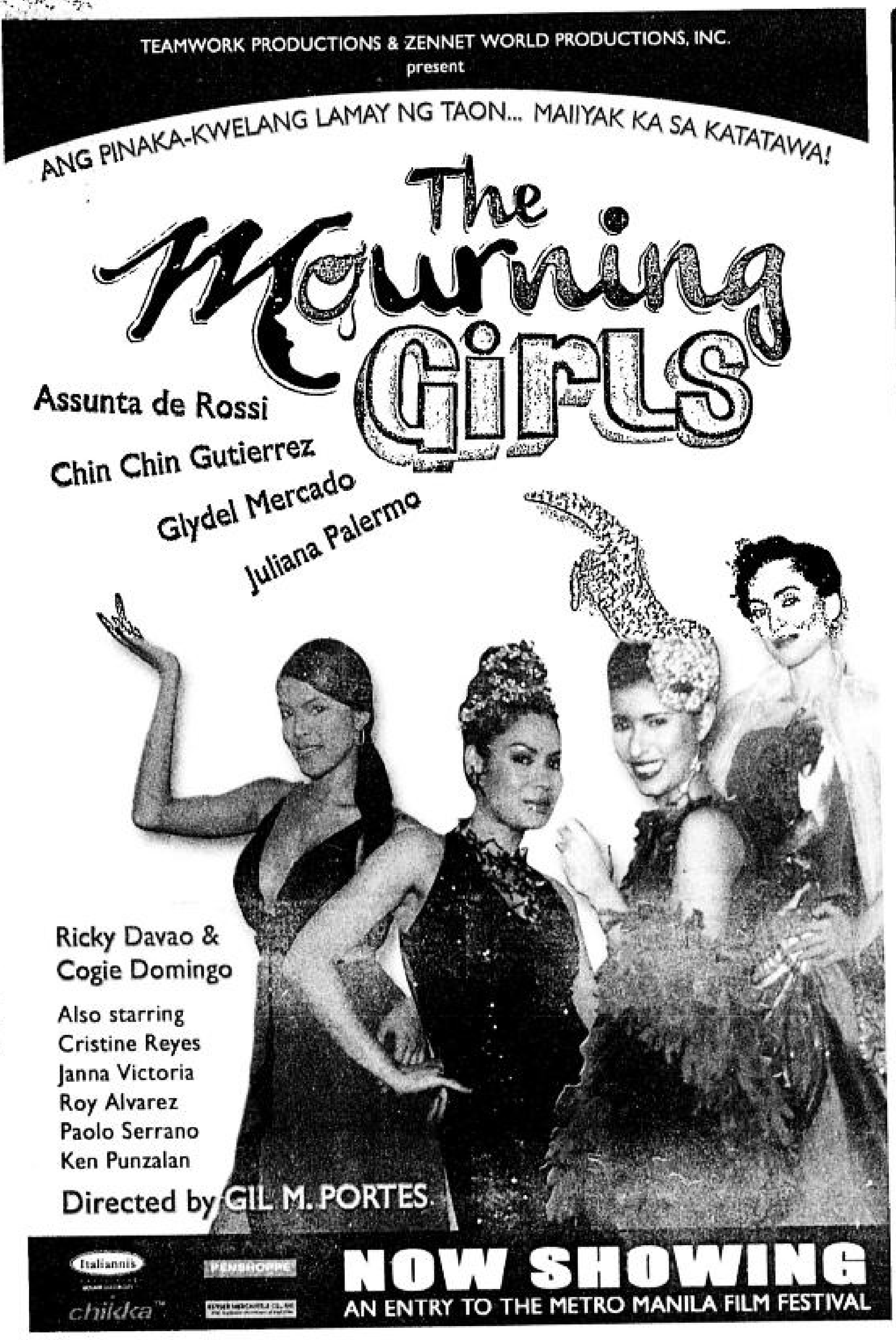
LOS ANGELES—Who's afraid of a couple of gay cowboys?

Not moviegoers, who helped "Brokeback Mountain" post the highest per-screen average over the film-flush holiday weekend.

The Ang Lee film, which follows the 20-year forbidden romance between two roughneck ranch hands, earned $13,599 per theater, compared with $9,305 for weekend winner "King Kong" and $8,225 for "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe."

Early numbers—and awards buzz—establish the picture's staying power, industry insiders say. "Brokeback" earned a leading seven Golden Globe nominations.

Distributors planned to roll out the film slowly. It opened in just six theaters, and expanded to 69 theaters the following week, then to 217 over the holiday weekend, reaching suburban audiences. *AP*



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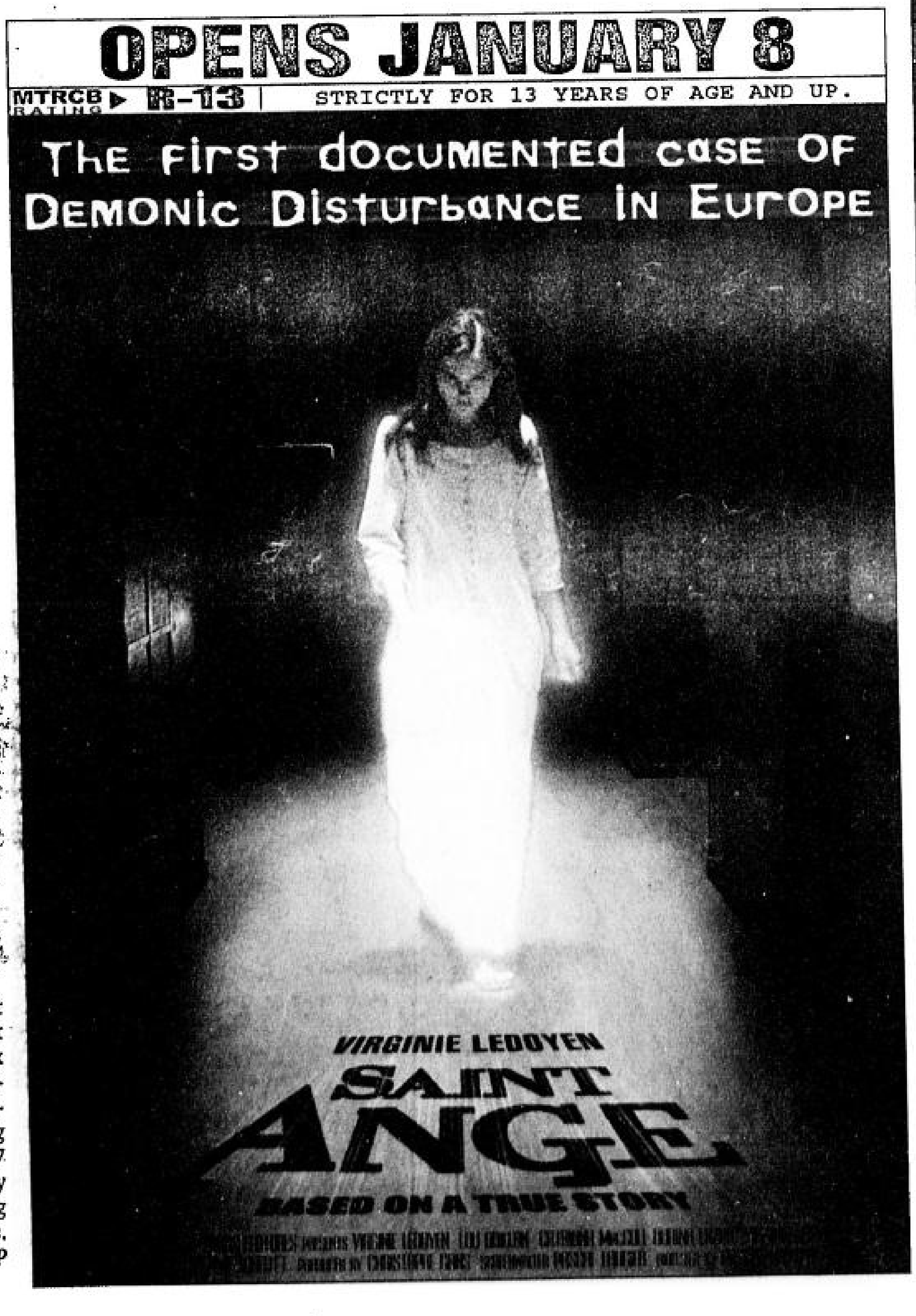

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2 (DOLBY)	MULAWIN THE MOVIE GP
3 (DOLBY)	AKO LEGAL WIFE P13
4 (DOLBY)	EXODUS GP

PREMIERES

(DOLBY)	CLOSED

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1	MULAWIN
2	EXODUS
3	BLUE MOON
4	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266160

3	EXODUS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
5	MOURNING GIRLS

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 6433994

1	AKO LEGAL WIFE
2	ENTENG KABISOTE -2
3	MOURNING GIRL
4	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan,
Telephone No (044) 600-3026

1	MULAWIN
2	ENTENG KABISOTE -2
3	EXODUS

Cinemagic Pacific Mall
(Lucena City) tel. 6605271

1	AKO LEGAL WIFE
2	ENTENG KABISOTE -2
3	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
4	MULAWIN

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	EXODUS
2 (SDDS)	MULAWIN
3 (DTS)	ENTENG KABISOTE -2
4 GOLD (DTS)	MOURNING GIRL
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
6 GOLD (SDDS)	KUTOB
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	BLUE MOON
8 (DOLBY STEREO)	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
9 (DOLBY STEREO)	ENTENG KABISOTE -2
10 (DOLBY STEREO)	AKO LEGAL WIFE

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY)	AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 (DOLBY)	ENTENG KABISOTE -2
3 (DOLBY)	BLUE MOON
4 (DOLBY)	EXODUS

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

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2	MOURNING GIRL
3	ENTENG KABISOTE
4	BLUE MOON
5	MULAWIN

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	ENTENG KABISOTE
2	LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
3	AKO LEGAL WIFE
4	BLUE MOON

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	MULAWIN
2	EXODUS
3	MOURNING GIRL

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue
(Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1	AKO LEGAL WIFE
2	ENTENG KABISOTE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	MULAWIN
2	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
3 (DTS EX)	ENTENG KABISOTE
4	AKO LEGAL WIFE

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1	MULAWIN
2	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
3 (DOLBY)	AKO LEGAL WIFE
4 (DTS)	ENTENG KABISOTE

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1	MULAWIN
2	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
3 (DOLBY)	AKO LEGAL WIFE
4 (DTS)	ENTENG KABISOTE

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	MULAWIN
2	EXODUS

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 (DOLBY)	ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 (DOLBY)	EXODUS
4 (DOLBY)	KUTOB

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	MULAWIN
2 (DTS)	ENTENG KABISOTE
3 (DOLBY)	EXODUS
4	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146

1	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
2 (DOLBY)	EXODUS
3 (DTS)	ENTENG KABISOTE
4	MULAWIN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	ENTENG KABISOTE
2	MULAWIN
3 (DOLBY)	EXODUS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
2	ENTENG KABISOTE
3 (DOLBY)	EXODUS
4 DTS.	MULAWIN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1	EXODUS
2	MULAWIN
3 (DOLBY)	ENTENG KABISOTE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)

1	EXODUS
2	ENTENG KABISOTE

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
2	EXODUST

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	BLUE MOON
2	MULAWIN
3	LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
4 (DTS)	EXODUST

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	EXODUST
2	ENTENG KABISOTE
3 (DTS)	MULAWIN
4	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
5	ENTENG KABISOTE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL
2	ENTENG KABISOTE
3	MULAWIN
4	EXODUST

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	BLUE MOON
2	MOURNING GIRLS

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Stars talk about their biggest blessings in 2005 and goals for 2006

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

AS WE WELCOME THE NEW YEAR, WE ASK some celebrities about the best things that 2005 brought their way and what their No. 1 goal is for 2006.

May the Year of the Dog give everyone more blessings to bark about and less pains that bite the heart. Just as a dog is man's best friend, may each day of 2006 befriend you in all the ways that count.

Bonne Annee tout le monde!!

Lorna Tolentino

One of the best things I discovered in 2005 was the right workout routine and diet—through my trainer, Rica Velasco. In 2006, I plan to do my share in uplifting the entertainment industry.

Bong Revilla

The biggest blessing I got in 2005 was the birth of my first *apo*, Jose Gabriel. I don't mind being a *lolo* at all. *Umuusok pa naman ako.* Ha-ha-ha. I intend to help more people through public service, and help revive the local movie industry this year.

Carmina Villaroel

So many good things happened to me this past year. One is the TV commercial that I did with my kids. It's a first for my twins. Also, Zoren and I were able to build our dream house. It's the product of our blood, sweat and tears. I can't ask for anything this year—maybe just more "*rackets*" for Zoren and me.

Mark Herras

The best thing about last year was that my first album turned gold and, also, I was able to buy a house. My priority this 2006 is to open a business, an internet cafe.

Polo Ravales

2005 was a remarkable year for me 'cause I made my show biz comeback. My main goal this year is to do a film with me playing the lead role *na pang*-award.

Duncan Ramos

Realizing deep facts about life and music helped me take a big leap in 2005. In 2006, South Border will be in the US from March onwards. I hope this turns out well for the band.

Mike Tan

Winning "Starstruck" was the highlight of 2005 for me. This year, I'll focus on improving myself in all aspects.

Melanie Marquez

My show on QTV 11, "Ginang Fashionista" was 2005's best gift for me. This year, my main goal is to buy a house and lot in Forbes Park. *Ang* dream big *dapat, 'di ba?*"

(E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com)

CHRISTOPHER DE LEON
DENNIS TRILLO
BOOTS ANSON-ROA & EDDIE GARCIA
JENNYLYN MERCADO
MARK HERRAS
PAULEEN LUNA
True love happens once in a...
BLUE MOON
a Palanca Award-winning screenplay
a film by JOEL LAMANGAN, DGPI
POLO RAVALES
REGGIE CURLEY
TIN TIN BERSOLA-BABAO
PAOLO PARAISO
VANGIE LABALAN
TIN ARNALDO
PINKY AMADOR
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Mano Po 4?!
Directed by JOEL LAMANGAN, dgpi
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Cherry Pie Picache
Jay Manalo
and ZsaZsa Padilla
John Prats
JC de Vera
Bianca King
Ella Guevara
Julianne Lee
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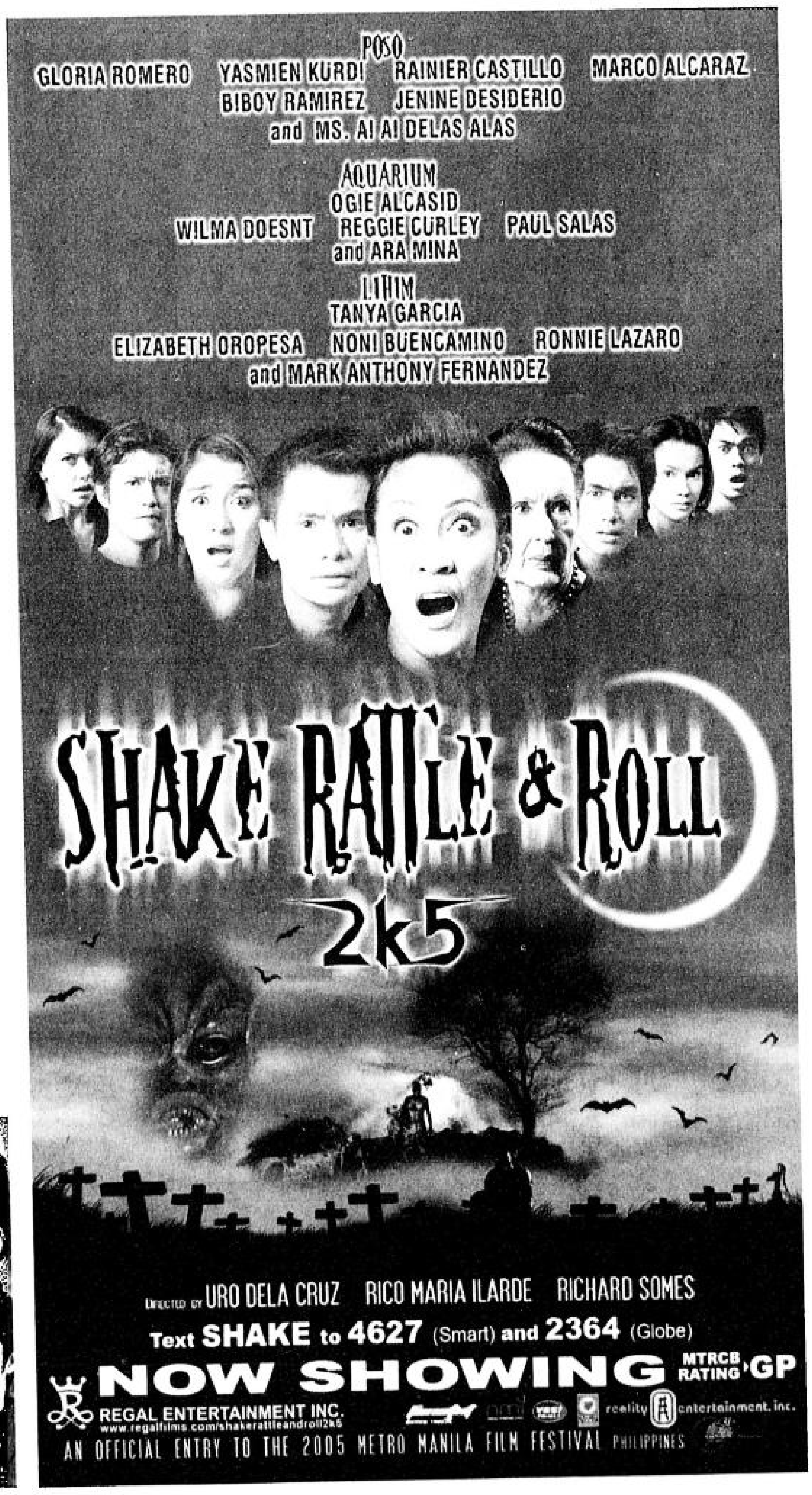
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GLORIA ROMERO
YASMIEN KURDI
RAINIER CASTILLO
MARCO ALCARAZ
BIBOY RAMIREZ
JENINE DESIDERIO
and MS. AI AI DELAS ALAS
AQUARIUM
OGIE ALCASID
WILMA DOESNT
REGGIE CURLEY
PAUL SALAS
and ARA MINA
LIHIM
TANYA GARCIA
ELIZABETH OROPESA
NONI BUENCAMINO
RONNIE LAZARO
and MARK ANTHONY FERNANDEZ
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DIRECTED BY URO DELA CRUZ
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5 Days To Go

Six for the Metro Filmfest

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

AS OF THIS WRITING, WE'VE VIEWED SIX OF the 10 movies currently showing in the 2005 Metro Manila Film Festival.

We're glad we were able to watch "Exodus," because it features, not just imaginative visual effects, but some beautiful images that go beyond technology. The noteworthy production's weakest suit is its thin storytelling.

The images in "Mulawin2 are also compelling, so the fantasy-adventure production is similarly viewable. Its weakest elements are its repetitive fight scenes and wooden performances that are upstaged by the striking visuals.

"Blue Moon," the filmfest's only drama, tells the unique story of three generations of men (**Eddie Garcia, Christopher de Leon** and **Dennis Trillo**) who are searching for love in its different formes.

The movie features felt performances by the male leads and **Boots Anson-Roa**, but tackles too many themes, and comes off as occasionally manipulative. Still, a should-see movie.

"Ako Legal Wife" is funny and has an eventful script. But polygamist **Jay Manalo** hardly ages, **Zsa Zsa Padilla** is entertaining but miscast, and **Rufa Mae Quinto** is roundly upstaged by **Cherry Pie Picache**. Despite its flaws, however, we're glad we viewed this production.

Wish we could say the same for "Kutob," but the psycho thriller, while visually compelling, is compromised by its protagonist being so obviously warped much too early in the story.

Thus, we wonder why the people he meets don't give him a wide berth and allow him to make them his victims. They come off as pretty silly as a result, and the film isn't scary—a no-no for a so-called thriller like this.

That's also the problem with "Shake, Rattle & Roll 2k5." The first story is bogged down by strident attempts at comedy, while the second is compromised by clunky storytelling and a stunning lack of initiative on the victims' part (get the heck out of that vile condo unit, you!).

The best episode is the third story, with its strikingly bucolic and atmospheric visuals, but its *aswang* tale is poorly developed and realized.

Perhaps it's time to give the "SRR" film franchise a long rest, so it can renergize itself? Its latest reincarnation is a peevish, phlegmatic ghost of its earlier selves.

All told, therefore, the 2005 Filmfest's biggest come-ons are its well-visualized fantasy productions, which as expected have topped the box office, powering the festival to its most financially successful year yet.

But it's gratifying to see relatively "smaller" productions like "Blue Moon" and "Ako Legal Wife" providing alternative viewing options, not just in terms of format, but also (in the case of "Blue Moon") thematic significance.

Wish we could have more of that in future festivals, so after the initial popcorn surge of visual excitement shall have ebbed, something of substance would remain.

'Shake, Rattle & Roll' should take a rest

"BLUE Moon": Good viewing option

'Jane Doe' adventures on Hallmark

HALLMARK Channel welcomes 2006 with some Jane Doe adventure. In the debut episode on Jan. 1 at 9 p.m., "Jane Doe: Vanishing Act," Cathy Davis (Lea Thompson) assumes her secret identity as government agent Jane Doe, and solves the mystery of the missing computer file that holds the secrets of the USA's defense system.

On Jan. 8 at 9 p.m., "Jane Doe: Now You See It, Now You Don't" has Cathy catching the thief who stole the Declaration of Independence. But, when her main suspect is murdered, she realize's she's up against a cunning master.

And, at 9 p.m. on Jan. 15, "Jane Doe: Till Death Do Us Part" zeroes in on an arms dealer who dies while serving a life sentence. When his body disappears, Jane Doe is asked to investigate.

'Light a Million Mornings'

A BENEFIT concert, "Light a Million Morning," will be held at the CCP on Jan. 6 and 7, 2006, showcasing the Loboc Children's Choir and Pundaquit Virtousi.

Also performing are violinist **Alfonso "Coke" Bolipata** and **Julian Quirit**, conductor of the Australian Pops Orchestra, together with his daughter Eliza, who also plays solo violin.

The concert will be directed by **Leo Rialp**, with **Danny Favis** as musical arranger. It will benefit 650 children at the Tuloy sa Don Bosco Streetchildren Village.

Second album

RACHELLE Ann Go has come out with her second album, "I Care," the collaborative effort of songwriters, arrangers and producers from Germany, Italy, the United States and the Philippines. The first single release from the new album is "If You Walk Away."

RACHELLE Ann Go

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

MORNING GIRLS R13 Please call for screening schedule	MULAWIN GP 12:20,2:50,5:30, 7:50,10:15	AKO LEGAL WIFE: MANO PO 4 PG13 12:30,2:50,5:10, 7:30,10:00
ENTENG KABISOTE: THE LEGEND CONTINUES GP 12:50,3:10,5:30, 7:50,10:10	BLUE MOON GP Please call for screening schedule	EXODUS: TALES FROM THE ENCHANTED KINGDOM GP 12:40,3:00,5:20, 7:40,10:00

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-144041

SHANG CINEPLEX

① ENTENG KABISOTE 2
MTRCB GP
12.20, 2.45, 5.10, 7.35, 10.00

③ AKO LEGAL WIFE
MTRCB PG-13
12.20, 2.45, 5:10, 7:35, 10.00

② MULAWIN THE MOVIE
MTRCB GP
12.00, 2.30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

④ EXODUS
MTRCB GP
11.40, 2.10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40

PREMIERE THEATRE (CLOSED)

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

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Watch the 2005 Metro Manila Film Festival starting December 26, 2005 at the Shang Cineplex for only P120.00

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CINEMA 5 BLUE MOON GP

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Araneta Center Leisure Guide

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EXODUS 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA BLUE MOON
SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30	AKO, LEGAL WIFE 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
MULAWIN 11:30 / 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	BLUE MOON
ENTENG KABISOTE 2 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30	MOURNING GIRLS
KUTOB 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30	LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

ALI MALL CINEMAS

❶ ENTENG KABISOTE 2 11:45 / 1:55 / 4:05 / 6:15 / 8:25	❹ MOURNING GIRLS 12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00 / 6:00
❷ MULAWIN 12:35 / 3:05 / 5:35 / 8:05	❺ AKO LEGAL WIFE 11:20 / 1:40 / 4:00 / 6:20 / 8:40
❸ BLUE MOON 12:15 R4 / 1:30 / 3:45 / 6:00	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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•Ako Legal Wife• The funny and surprising fourth installment of the well-known "Mano Po" series.

•Enteng Kabisote• Re-enter the magical world of Engkantasia with Enteng and his family.

• Exodus • One man is destined to save mankind from the dark forces that threatens it.

• Kutob • One girl never thought that love could be that obsessive.

• Mulawin The Movie • The fantaserye we all admired on TV is now on the big screen.

• Shake Rattle & Roll 2k5 • The latest version of the classic horror series.

• Terrorist Hunter • A special military group is on a mission to capture evil terrorist operatives.

GUARANTEED SEATS

THE PODIUM 633-8976		CEBU (032) 231-3876	
1	BLUE MOON	1	AKO LEGAK WIFE
		2	KING KONG
2	AKO LEGAL WIFE	3	ENTENG KABISOTE 2
MEGAMALL		MANILA	
1	EXODUS	6	MULAWIN (THE MOVIE)

METRO MANILA

SM MEGAMALL
1 EXODUS
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
5 KUTOB
6 AKO LEGAL WIFE
7 MOURNING GIRLS
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
9 BLUE MOON
10 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
11 EXODUS
12 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

SM CITY STA. MESA
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 EXODUS
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
8 MOURNING GIRLS
9 BLUE MOON
10 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

SM CITY BICUTAN
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 BLUE MOON
3 MULAWIN
4 EXODUS

SM VALENZUELA NOW OPEN
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 EXODUS
4 BLUE MOON

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
1 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
2 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
3 KUTOB
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
5 MOURNING GIRLS
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 EXODUS
8 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
9 BLUE MOON
10 AKO LEGAL WIFE
11 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
12 EXODUS

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
1 BLUE MOON
2 MOURNING GIRLS
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 BLUE MOON
5 EXODUS
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
7 AKO LEGAL WIFE
8 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
9 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
10 KUTOB

SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT
1 BLUE MOON
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 EXODUS
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
5 MOURNING GIRLS
6 BLUE MOON
7 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
8 EXODUS

SM CITY MANILA
1 MOURNING GIRLS
2 EXODUS
3 KUTOB
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
5 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
6 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
7 BLUE MOON
8 AKO LEGAL WIFE
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
10 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
11 EXODUS
12 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO

SM SAN LAZARO
1 EXODUS
2 BLUE MOON
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
4 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

LUZON

SM CITY PAMPANGA
1 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
2 EXODUS
3 BLUE MOON
4 MOURNING GIRLS
5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM CITY BAGUIO
1 BLUE MOON
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM MOLINO NOW OPEN
1 MULAWIN THE MO
2 EXODUS
3 BLUE MOON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM CITY BACOOR
1 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
5 EXODUS
6 BLUE MOON
7 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5
8 MOURNING GIRLS

SM CITY MARILAO
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 BLUE MOON
4 AKO LEGAL WIFE

SM CITY DASMARINAS
1 EXODUS
2 KING KONG
3 BLUE MOON
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 2

SM CITY LUCENA
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
2 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
3 BLUE MOON
4 EXODUS

SM CITY BATANGAS
1 KING KONG
2 EXODUS
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 BLUE MOON

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU
1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 KING KONG
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
4 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
5 BLUE MOON
6 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
7 MOURNING GIRLS
8 EXODUS

SM CITY ILOILO
1 EXODUS
2 LAGOT KA SA KUYA KO
3 MOURNING GIRLS
4 BLUE MOON
5 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
6 KING KONG
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
8 AKO LEGAL WIFE

SM CITY DAVAO
1 EXODUS
2 KING KONG
3 MOURNING GIRLS
4 BLUE MOON
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 2
6 AKO LEGAL WIFE

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 KING KONG
2 AKO LEGAL WIFE
3 MULAWIN THE MOVIE
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 2K5

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GALLERIA 632-9116

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE • THX	12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	6 MULAWIN	12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
2 EXODUS	10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	7 TERRORIST HUNTER	12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
3 ENTENG KABISOTE	12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00	8 EXODUS	12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:30
4 KUTOB	12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	9 ENTENG KABISOTE	10:15 12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00
5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL	10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	10 MULAWIN	2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50		
2 ENTENG KABISOTE	10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	5 KUTOB	10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 MULAWIN	10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00	6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL	10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00
4 TERRORIST HUNTER	10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	7 EXODUS	10:30 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:40 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL	10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05	5 AKO LEGAL WIFE	10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05
2 EXODUS	2:15 4:35 6:55 9:15	6 TERRORIST HUNTER	2:15 4:35 6:55 9:15
3 ENTENG KABISOTE	12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:20	7 KUTOB	12:10 2:30 4:50 7:10 9:20
4 MULAWIN	11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00	8 EXODUS	11:25 1:45 4:05 6:25 8:45

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 EXODUS
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
3 KUTOB
4 TERRORIST HUNTER
5 MULAWIN
6 ENTENG KABISOTE
7 AKO LEGAL WIFE
8 ENTENG KABISOTE

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
2 EXODUS
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

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1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
3 EXODUS
4 MULAWIN

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2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 MULAWIN
4 AKO LEGAL WIFE
5 EXODUS

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1 KING KONG
2 EXODUS
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 MULAWIN
5 EXODUS

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1 MULAWIN
2 TERRORIST HUNTER
3 KUTOB
4 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
5 EXODUS

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 KING KONG
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 MULAWIN
4 MULAWIN

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 MULAWIN
4 TERRORIST HUNTER
5 KUTOB
6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

1 AKO LEGAL WIFE
2 TERRORIST HUNTER
3 KUTOB
4 EXODUS
5 ENTENG KABISOTE
6 MULAWIN

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1 KING KONG
2 EXODUS
3 MULAWIN
4 ENTENG KABISOTE
5 AKO LEGAL WIFE
6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 KUTOB
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL
3 EXODUS
4 AKO LEGAL WIFE
5 ENTENG KABISOTE
6 MULAWIN

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	4 EXODUS
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	3 THX MULAWIN GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 TERRORIST HUNTER	5 KUTOB	6 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	7 EXODUS
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 AKO LEGAL WIFE	2 ENTENG KABISOTE 2		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX MULAWIN GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX TERRORIST HUNTER GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 KUTOB GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL GUARANTEED SEATS	5 EXODUS GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX MULAWIN	2 TERRORIST HUNTER		
	3 KUTOB	4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	5 EXODUS	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 ENTENG KABISOTE 2	2 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL	3 MULAWIN	4 TERRORIST HUNTER

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② KUTOB
③ MULAWIN
④ ENTENG KABISOTE 2
⑤ AKO LEGAL WIFE

EVENTS! EVENTS!

MARKET! MARKET!
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A2-580, Series of 2005

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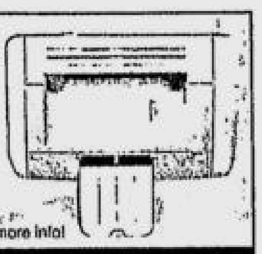
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91-day T-bill rate falls to 40-month low

Cash-rich banks swamp gov't auction

By Michelle V. Remo

TREASURY BILL RATES FELL ACROSS ALL MATURITIES, WITH the yield of the 91-day securities dropping to a 40-month low, during the government's first auction for 2006 yesterday.

The Bureau of Treasury said the auction results were due to optimism about the government's fiscal performance this year and the lingering high level of liquidity among banks coupled with the reduced volume of debt offering by the government for 2006.

The rate for the 91-day bill, used as a benchmark by banks in pricing loans, breached the 5-percent level to hit 4.961 percent. This was the lowest since Aug. 5, 2002.

"The decline in the rates was steeper than what the market expected. It was due to the liquidity overhang from last year and the government's more comfortable cash position (which allowed it to trim down its borrowings)," National Treasurer Omar Cruz told reporters in a briefing after the auction.

The 182-day bills fetched a rate of 6.807 percent, 39.9 basis points lower than the last rate recorded for 2005. The rate for the 364-day paper hit 7.611 percent, 35.8 basis points lower than the previous level.

The banks, still awash with cash, scrambled for the virtually risk-free government securities.

The six-month debt instrument was more than nine times over-subscribed, with tenders reaching P9.1 billion compared with the debt offering of only P1 billion.

The one-year government bills were over-subscribed by more than six times, as tenders stood at P9.59 billion compared with the debt offering of only P1.5 billion.

Bids for the 91-day bill reached P2.86 billion, or more than twice higher than the P1 billion on offer.

The P3.5-billion weekly treasury bill offering in the first quarter of this year was a reduction from the P4.5 billion in the fourth quarter of 2005. Cruz said the government could afford to borrow less because of the further improvement in the government's fiscal standing this year coming from an over-performance in 2005.

Cruz said preliminary estimates showed that the national government would incur a budget deficit for the whole of 2005 that would be lower than P160 billion, or the low-end of the initial expectations by fiscal authorities. The Department of Finance earlier said the 2005 deficit could hit anywhere between P160 billion and P165 billion, better than the official target of P180 billion and lower than the P184.6-billion deficit in 2004.

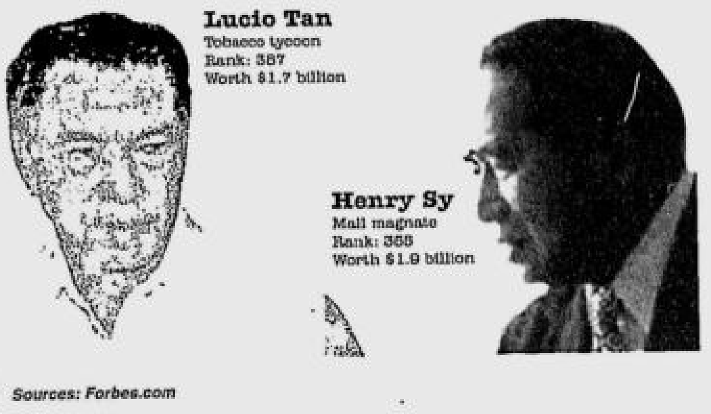
"The market has an intuitive sense of how we ended 2005 on a fiscal basis," Cruz said., He noted that the projected 2005 deficit of below P160 billion did not factor in the non-cash revenue collections of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, the government's biggest revenue earners.

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Richest Filipinos in 2005

Forbes world's billionaires list



Sources: Forbes.com

TWO FILIPINOS have been in Forbes magazine's world billionaire list for the past five years—Henry Sy of SM and Lucio Tan of Fortune Tobacco and Philippine Airlines. While Sy moved up from spot No. 406 in 2004 to no. 355, Tan went down from 377th place to no. 387. Jaime Zobel de Ayala of the Ayala Group of Companies also made it in 2005 at No. 437.

Jamie Alarcon, PDI Research

Customs says it exceeded 2005 goal by ₱2B

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS, WHICH had been struggling to hit its revenue target until the last few months of 2005, announced yesterday that it surpassed its P151.2-billion collection goal.

The BOC's efforts were boosted by a last-minute decision by authorities to include non-cash duty payments in the computation of the agency's revenue collection.

Citing preliminary figures, Deputy Commissioner and former Customs officer-in-charge Alexander Arevalo said the BOC exceeded its 2005 target by about P2 billion.

Arevalo, during yesterday's turnover ceremony to new Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales, attributed the bureau's attainment of its revenue goal to strengthened collection efforts by various port districts.

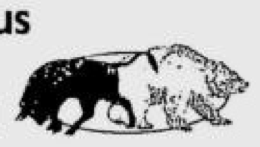
But the BOC admitted that non-cash duty collections accounted for at least P12 billion of the total revenues last year. For the 11 months to November last year, the BOC was still facing an P8.3-billion revenue shortfall compared to its 11-month target.

Customs Deputy Commissioner Gallant Soriano, in charge of the revenue

CUSTOMS/ B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

Our fabulous vacation in Thailand



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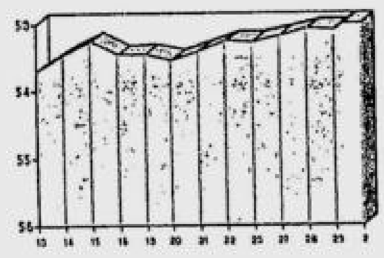
INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱52.883 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 2, 2006

¥117.48 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 30, 2005

GOLD: $514.00-514.50

per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 30, 2005

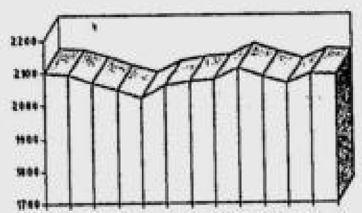
STOCK MARKET

Shares close 0.19% lower

SHARE PRICES closed 0.19 percent lower yesterday, the first trading day of the year, as investors locked in profits made last week, dealers said.

They said the pullback was expected due to a lack of strong positive leads and PLDT's losses last Friday in New York.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

The composite index fell 4.04 points to 2,092 after trading between 2,085.45 and 2,096.04. Volume was a thin 448.5 million shares worth P343.2 million.

Declines led gains 24 to 19, with 47 stocks unchanged.

"Investors were a bit disappointed after the market closed 2005 at below 2,100 points despite yearend window-dressing," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

"The thin volumes also indicate that most investors are still on vacation or on the sidelines waiting for leads," he added.

Philippine financial markets were closed last Friday for a public holiday.

PLDT, the most actively traded stock, fell P15 to P1,820 after losses in its New York-listed shares.

Bank of the Philippine Islands was down 50 centavos at P54 but mall operator SM Prime Holdings advanced 20 centavos to P8.10.

San Miguel "A" shares were steady at P65 while its "B" shares rose 50 centavos to P89.

AFP

SMC's Aussie subsidiary posts revenue hike

BERRI LTD., SAN MIGUEL Corp.'s wholly owned juice subsidiary in Australia, reported its revenues rose 3 percent to A$371.9 million from January to September last year over the same period in 2004.

The company also reported an operating income of A$20.3 million for the nine-month period, San Miguel said in a disclosure yesterday to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

San Miguel had said it had fully acquired through its wholly owned subsidiary, National Foods Holdings Ltd., the remaining 49-percent stake in Berri for approximately A$169 million.

Berri is Australia's leading juice manufacturer. Its brands include Berri, Daily Juice, Australian Fresh, Just Juice and Juice It Up. Apart from juices, Berri also produces bottled water.

San Miguel initially bought half of Berri in August 2004, then acquired another 1 percent several months later to give it control and enable the integration of its operations with Australian dairy firm National Foods earlier this year.

Berri churns out roughly A$600 million in annual revenues. The company's extensive export trade spans 20 countries, mainly in Asia and the Middle East.

Berri's integration into National Foods is seen to double National Foods' exports to the Asia-Pacific over the next two years.

Some A$55 million of National Foods' and Berri's combined revenue currently come from key export markets like Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Dutch firm raises stake in Alaska

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

DUTCH DAIRY CO-operative Campina B.V. has beefed up its stake in milk products manufacturer Alaska Milk Corp. to 7.9 percent.

Campina chief executive officer Justinus Sanders reported to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that Campina has already acquired 71 million shares of Alaska, or 7.9 percent of the local firm's outstanding capital stock, as of Dec. 21, or up from an initial holdings equivalent to 3 percent.

Campina BV bought a total of 42.18 million shares of Alaska at P3.50 to P4 a share between October and December.

One of the deals, which involved the biggest tranche of 38.7 million shares last Dec. 21, was brokered by UBS Securities Philippines.

Sources said Campina, a long-time shareholder of Alaska, earlier expressed its interest in increasing its stake in Alaska. It could not yet be determined whether Campina's 7.9-percent interest in the milk company was enough for one board seat.

Alaska was incorporated in 1994 and began its operations in 1972 through Holland Milk Products Inc., a partnership between Holland Canned Milk BV and General Milling Corp. The company was listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange in January 1995.

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87% of BOI-registered projects implemented, says trade exec

Investment commitments hit ₱151B as of Nov.

By Ronnel W. Doming

REALIZED INVESTMENTS AMONG PROJECTS listed with the Board of Investments averaged at 87 percent in the past 11 years, according to Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez.

But Hernandez, who is also BOI Managing Head, said the figure was preliminary considering that the agency was still consolidating a report on the subject.

In a separate interview, Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said he wanted to change the Department of Trade and Industry's tack on reporting investment figures to realized projects as opposed to committed outlay.

"Concerned agencies have been directed to prepare for this," Favila said.

Also, Hernandez said projects committed to the BOI was expected to have reached P151 billion in the 11 months ending November although it was not yet clear whether the DTI's target of P230 billion in investments for 2005 would be attained.

Early last year, the DTI said investments for 2004 went up 271 percent to a total of P210.7 billion against the P56.7 billion posted in 2003.

Hernandez said the 2005 target for investments was set at P200 billion, which was "on the low side" considering that foreign investors' mining projects were expected to start flowing last year.

He also said the P200-billion target was almost guaranteed since the government already had leads for at least P100 billion in investments in non-mining projects alone.

Then Trade Secretary Juan B. Santos said the government had received investment leads worth about P160 billion.

The possible ventures were mostly in mining, processed food and marine products, infrastructure, motor vehicles and parts, electronics, heath and wellness, information technology and IT-enabled services, shipping and ship building sectors.

Under the government's medium-term investment priorities plan, promotional efforts are concentrated on the 11 sectors mentioned.

Traders track share prices at the gallery of the Philippine Stock Exchange. Share prices closed 0.19 percent lower on the first trading day of the year as investors took profits from last week's gains.

JAY DIRECTO

New classification scheme OKd

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE HAS started implementing a new industry classification scheme for listed companies in line with efforts to elevate it's operations to world-class standards.

The new industry classification system categorizes a listed company according to where it gets the bulk of its revenues.

Under the old system, a listed company was classified according to its primary purpose as stated in its incorporation papers.

"The move will align the PSE stock grouping with classification standards being followed by other leading stock exchanges all over the world," PSE president Francis Lim said in a statement.

"With the new system, investors, especially the foreigners, can more easily target particular industries they want to watch without much adjustment in their templates because the new classifications are attuned to global standards," Lim said.

The new industry classification identifies an industry category of a listed company based on a Philippine Standard Industry Classification.

The new classification includes two new groupings, dubbed holding firms and service sectors, while retaining the financial, property and the combined mining and oil sectors.

It also simplifies the tag for the old "commercial-industrial" (C-I) sector by renaming it simply the industrial sector.

Many firms affected by the regrouping, which come from the old C-I sector, now make up the bulk of the new service sector.

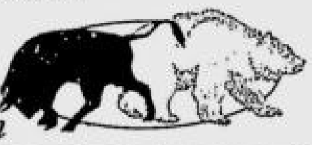
PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 2, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	34	34	34	34	24,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	54.5	54.5	54	54	469,800
China Banking Corp.	620	620	620	620	120
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	58.5	58.5	57.5	57.5	77,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32.5	32	32	701,200
Philippine National Bank	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	5,600
Phil. Savings Bank	35	35	35	35	10,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	32	32	32	32	3,600
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTION					
First Abacus Financial	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	30,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3070	3070	3070	3070	120
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	48.5	49	48.5	49	34,300
Manila Electric Co. A	14.25	14.5	14	14.25	15,300
Manila Electric Co. B	21.75	21.75	21.5	21.75	25,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.2	1,287,000
Petron Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	539,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	40,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24	24.5	24	24.25	16,800
Jollibee Foods Corp.	40.5	40.5	40	40	291,000
Pancake House Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	50,000
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	370,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	65	64	65	9,800
San Miguel Corp. B	88.5	89	88.5	89	17,900
Universal Robina Corp.	19.5	19.5	19.25	19.25	22,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	150,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.33	1,180,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.77	0.78	0.77	0.78	300,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.35	4.4	4.3	4.4	286,000
CHEMICALS					
Pryce Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	1,000,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	312.5	317.5	312.5	317.5	22,920
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.9	95,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	400,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.08	2.1	2.08	2.1	316,000
APC Group Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	540,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9	9	9	9	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.1	59,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3	3.1	3	3.05	177,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	450,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	207,000
Medco Holdings	0.44	0.49	0.43	0.43	4,500,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	5,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	30,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	500,000
SM Investments Corp.	240	243	240	242	7,340
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.9	9.9	9.8	9.9	185,000
Belle Corp.	1	1.02	1	1.02	594,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	35,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	800,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	2,200,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.38	1,639,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	1,020,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.22	1.24	1.2	1.22	528,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.34	2,300,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	3,000
SM Development Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.42	57,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8.1	7.9	8.1	4,547,000
SERVICES					
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	190,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	735	735	725	725	5,610
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.45	3.45	3.45	3.45	578,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1825	1825	1810	1820	97,690
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Ionics Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	5,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.046	0.049	0.046	0.049	2,300,000
Philweb Corp.	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.015	3,100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	200,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.2	37,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	30,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	10,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.28	0.3	0.28	0.3	310,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	25,000
Ipeople Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.9	2.9	30,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Paxys Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	402,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	10,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	151,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	5,770,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	4,380,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.018	14,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	2,400,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.006	0.0055	0.0055	355,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	75,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.76	1.76	1.72	1.74	2,008,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	29	29	28	28.5	35,300
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	18,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	10,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	1,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	500
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	13	13	13	13	203,000

Our fabulous vacation in Thailand

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

AFTER MY TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE TWO years ago, when we went for an incredibly cheap holiday to Hong Kong, I resolved to book a first class hotel through Thai Airways. For readers not aware of my previous disaster, I will briefly recap our adventures. We booked a 5-day/4-night trip to Hong Kong for only $75 each. Of course, I did not expect to ride in the Airbus or a jumbo, and I was prepared for an old propeller aircraft. Instead of being driven to Naia, we were taken to Luneta where we boarded an air balloon, together with many other people, a few goats and a carabao. There were no seat belts so we used scotch tape.

Halfway across, the stewardess informed us they were flying non-stop to Beijing, but we would be passing over Hong Kong airport, where we would have to jump from 2000 feet. She offered us parachutes at $100 each as optional extras. We jumped, let rip and landed safely on our bottoms, but my small daughter was a little behind. Anyway, we survived the ordeal, and this time around, things were very different.

We rode in the new wide-bodied Airbus. In fact, it is so wide that I was standing on the aisle with nobody in the way, and it took me 10 minutes to reach the window seat. The flight was uneventful, except that my wife was offered a job as a stewardess. When we alighted in Bangkok, I was astonished to read a sign saying "Man who walk sideways through airport turnstile is going to Bangkok." (If you don't get this the first time, read it again until you do).

As usual, my wife embarrassed me at immigration. Last year, when filling up the form marked SEX, M or F, she wrote W. The immigration officer asked, "Does that mean woman?" "No," she said, "It means Monday, Wednesday, Friday. This year, she wrote infrequently and the officer asked, "Is that one word or two?"

Anyway, we were picked up in a Mercedes, and taken 150 km to Pattaya in just two hours. The driver told me that although it is an excellent car, if it hits a tree, the Mercedes bends. I asked the management to give us a room near the elevator so I wouldn't have to walk far. They did better. They gave us a suite where the elevator ran through the center of the bedroom. Every time I walked naked out of the bathroom, a group of people would whistle. When I complained, they took away the bath.

In the hotel was a Chinese restaurant. It was so high class that the menu was written in French. And the security was fantastic. Room service and laundry were unlisted. The hotel was so big that whenever you dialed reception, you got charged long distance. Because of the tsunami a year ago, business was bad. In fact, it was so bad that the hotel started stealing towels from the guests. I tried to learn Thai because there are fewer words, but I found it difficult because none of them are English.

I could not change my pesos for baht. Nobody knew the rate, including the money-changers and the banks. They now have ATM machines with a notice: "Money speaks all languages, a fact you can determine. But nowadays, it only speaks in Japanese and German."

Pattaya is famous for its water sports. There is scuba diving, water mopeds for pedophiles, and best of all, para-sailing. These activities are too dangerous for a man of my age, so I stuck to surfing—until my Internet card ran out. One day, 20 pregnant refugees arrived ashore in a small dingy but the government could not do anything for them as they were all in the same boat.

Sometimes, staying in a first class hotel can be frustrating. I had to wear a coat and tie in the sauna. My daughter found it difficult to sleep, so I put her on the edge of the bed until she dropped off. It was so hot that the cows gave evaporated milk. In fact, it was so hot that I slept with the air conditioner under my pillow.

It's nice to be able to go abroad once a year. When I was young, we were so poor that my mother used to paint my feet black and lace up my toes. Now, I am in a hotel that is so expensive that my wife had to cosign for a ham sandwich. Yesterday, my wife went window-shopping and she bought five windows. I am not saying that my wife is a big spender, but Rustan's has opened a branch in our living room. It is funny how we got married. We were in the cinema and I said, "Do you like nuts?" She said, "If that's a proposal, I accept."

We had a fantastic New Year's Eve party. Huge quantities of food were arranged around the swimming pools. The waiter asked me if I like meatballs, and I told him that I had never been to one. My only problem is that I had insomnia. I told the doctor about it but he said, "Don't lose any sleep over it." I am writing this on the plane going back home. The pilot, Pontius, has just told us to fasten our seat belts so I have to belt up. Next week, it is back to the stock market. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

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Baguio Country Club	550,000	500,000
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Calatagan Golf Club "B"	70,000	-
Camp John Hay	200,000	165,000
Canlubang	550,000	490,000
Capitol Hills	70,000	45,000
Cebu Country Club	-	1,300,000
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000	-
Club Filipino	140,000	-
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	140,000	100,000
Forest Hills "B"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	-
Makati Sports Club "A"	200,000	165,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	250,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	Please Call
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	11,000,000
Manila Polo	2,200,000	2,100,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	370,000	300,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	720,000	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	400,000	-
Metroclub "A"	120,000	90,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	450,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	230,000	200,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	180,000	150,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	280,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	430,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	170,000	130,000
Rockwell	Please Call	-
Spa & Lodge	520,000	-
Sta. Elena "A"	1,300,000	1,100,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,600,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	300,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	650,000
Tagaytay Midlands	880,000	630,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	-
Valle Verde (Corporate)	200,000	-
Valley Golf	200,000	190,000
Wack Wack Golf Club	6,350,000	6,000,000

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Customs says it exceeded 2005 goal by ₱2B

From page B1

collection monitoring group, said the BOC's move to include the more than P12 billion worth of non-cash duty payments in its revenue computations was backed by a circular issued by the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC).

The interagency DBCC, tasked with setting the government's economic policies and targets, issued a circular last month allowing the BOC and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to include non-cash duty and tax payments in their revenue collection figures. The circular was issued amid huge revenue collection shortfalls by the BOC and the BIR, the two main revenue earners of the national government.

Non-cash duty and tax collections are mostly composed of payments in the form of Special Allotment Release Order (Saro). It is a document that a government entity can issue to the BIR or the BOC as payments for duty or tax obligations and allows the national government to simply deduct the amount from the official budget that is supposed to be given to the paying entity.

As the newly appointed Customs chief, Morales said the BOC would meet its P192-billion target for 2006.

"The 192-billion target for the year is no longer negotiable so we have to achieve it by yearend. I'm taking a hands-on management of the bureau," he said in a speech during the turnover ceremony.

Morales said he did not intend to implement new policies at the BOC, but instead would focus on implementing the policies that have already been initiated by his predecessors.

"Period for policy-making has long been gone. We are now in the stage of doing things and performing them right," he said.

Michelle V. Remo

CURRENCIES

January 2, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.843882	1.000000	53.0620
Japan	Yen	0.007163	0.008488	0.4504
United Kingdom	Pound	1.454515	1.723600	91.4577
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.108841	0.128977	6.8438
Switzerland	Franc	0.642762	0.761673	40.4159
Canada	Dollar	0.726045	0.860363	45.6526
Singapore	Dollar	0.507659	0.601576	31.9208
Australia	Dollar	0.618909	0.733407	38.9160
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.239008	2.653224	140.7854
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.225030	0.266660	14.1495
Brunei	Dollar	0.506137	0.599772	31.8251
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000086	0.000102	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.020580	0.024387	1.2940
UAE	Dirham	0.229765	0.272272	14.4473
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.185000	62.8785
Argentina	Peso	0.278970	0.330579	17.5412
Brazil	Real	0.361560	0.428449	22.7344
Denmark	Kroner	0.134064	0.158866	8.4297
India	Rupee	0.018770	0.022242	1.1802
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.223308	0.264620	14.0413
Mexico	New Peso	0.079432	0.094127	4.9946
New Zealand	Dollar	0.575714	0.682221	36.2000
Norway	Kroner	0.125278	0.148454	7.8773
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014131	0.016745	0.8885
South Africa	Rand	0.133769	0.158516	8.4112
Korea	Won	0.000835	0.000989	0.0525
Sweden	Kroner	0.106331	0.126002	6.6859
Syria	Pound	0.016257	0.019264	1.0222
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025759	0.030525	1.6197
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000393	0.000466	0.0247

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PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE

INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS

Offered for Sale are seven residential lots formerly belonging to the Peninsula Development Bank (Penbank), whereby six lots are located at Peninsula Homes, Subdivision, Barangay Bukal, Pagbilao, Quezon; and one lot is located at San Vicente, Gumaca, Quezon.

These seven residential lots are being offered on a per site and on an "as-is, where-is" basis, as follows:

Peninsula Homes Subdivision, Barangay Bukal, Pagbilao, Quezon

SITE NO.	TCT NO.	LOT NO.	AREA (sq.m.)	INDICATIVE PRICE
1	T-390084	Lot-8	120	54,000
2	T-390103	Lot-6, Blk. 6	230	150,000
3	T-390089	Lot-7, Blk. 6	204	133,000
4	T-390051	Lot-6	89	67,000
5	T-390061	Lot-12, Blk. 6	227	148,000
6	T-390078	Lot-1	117	47,000

San Vicente, Gumaca, Quezon

SITE NO.	TCT NO.	LOT NO.	AREA (sq.m.)	INDICATIVE PRICE
7*	T-411949	Lot-9239	348	49,000

*With informal dwellers

Offers will be received, opened and tabulated in the presence of offerors on 17 January 2006, 6th Floor, PMO Conference Room, NDMC Building, 104 Gamboa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Interested parties may request for the duly authenticated copies of the Offer for Sale documents for a nominal fee of P300.00 from the PMO Marketing Office, 104 Gamboa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

For more information, please call Mr. John DF. Baldemor of the PMO Marketing Department at 817-6331 or 817-8762.

(PDI--Jan. 3, 4 & 5, 2006)

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- ☞ Preferably Male, willing to work on a graveyard shift, fast-paced, dynamic and flexible environment.

☐ Background in sales is not necessary, but a plus..

Send your *Resume* to **GQY Distribution Group Inc.** at
GQY Distributors Inc., Dolores Homesite Extension, Dolores,
San Fernando Pampanga

or call/fax 045-9614048 and look for **Mr. Mar Manabat or Mr. Jess Yap.**
You can email it to
jessy@mail.irnet.net.ph or qdydistribution.com.ph

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late CIRILO C. DELOS REYES, SR. and CONCHITA FLORES has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs before Notary Public Myrna Donado Santiago of Cavite as per Doc#380 Page#76 Book#LIV Series of 2005
(PDI-Dec.20,27, 2005 & Jan.3,2006)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A Shares Cert. No. 325132-708 shares issued on 04/10/1989 & B Shares No. 285681-100 shares issued on 04 /10/1989 under Alberto Manahan were declared lost. If no contest received, new certificates will be issued. (PDI- JAN. 03, 10 & 17, 2006)

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O, HOLY ST. JUDE apostle and martyr, great in virtue, rich in miracles, near kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful inter-cessor of all who invoke your special patronage in time of need, to you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg to whom God has given such great power to come to my assistance. Help me in my present, urgent petition (make your request). In return, I promise to make your name known and cause you to be invoked. Saint Jude, pray for us and all who invoke your aid. Pray this nine times a day for nine consecutive days. On the eighth day your prayers will be answered, for this prayer has never known to fail. Please don't forget to publish this once your wish is granted.

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
Metro Manila Development Authority
PASIG RIVER REHABILITATION COMMISSION

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Project :	Pasig River Environmental Management and Rehabilitation Sector Development Program (PAREMAR)
Loan No. :	Asian Development Bank (ADB) Loan No. 1746-PHI
Description of Works :	Design, Site Development and Construction of 1,000 Units of Socialized Housing

1. The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has received a loan from the ADB toward the cost of PAREMAR and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan, together with the GOP counterpart funds, to payments under the Contract for Design, Site Development and Construction of 1,000 Units of Socialized Housing.
2. The Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) as the executing agency now invites sealed Bids from Eligible Bidders for the following contract packages:

Contract Package	Design, Site Development and Construction of 1,000 Units of Socialized Housing
Contract No.	Contract No.: EPA-RAP-H01
Contract Duration	360 Calendar Days
Project Description	Design, site development and construction of 1,000 units of socialized housing, including the following community facilities: School Building/s, Health Center/s, Multi-Purpose Halls, and Health/Day Care Center/s. Scope of work shall include the following: architectural works, structural works, electrical works, carpentry works, painting works, sanitary/plumbing workis, water supply, site work, site improvement and drainage work, among others.

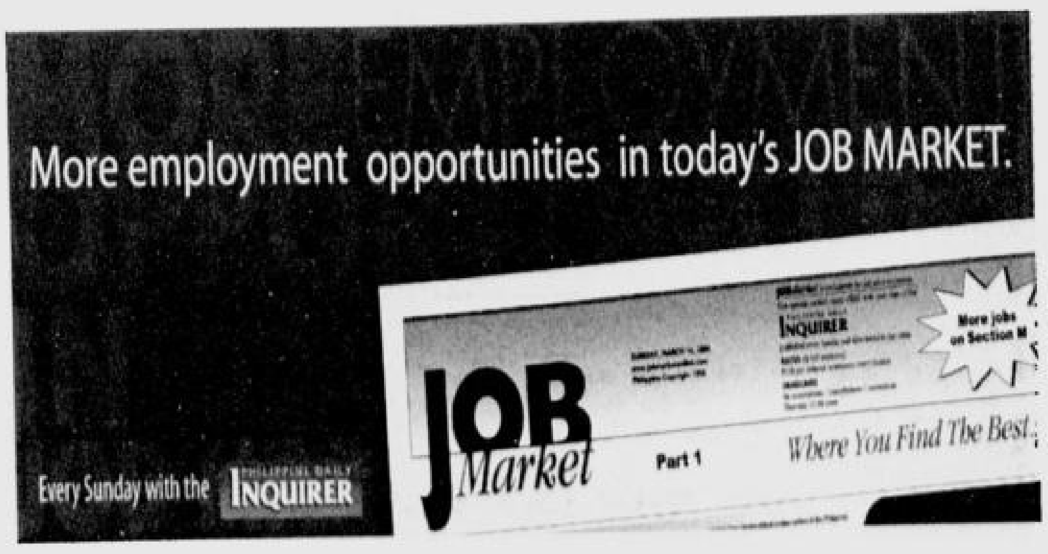
3. Proposals will be accepted from licensed private developers, GOP enterprises the majority of which is publicly-owned including non-government organizations (NGOs) with demonstrated track record in the development of sustainable communities including social preparation, design and construction of socialized/low-cost housing units employing community-participation and post-relocation capability-building activities. Licensed private developers and NGOs could submit proposals either as individual bidders, individual bidders with subcontractors or as joint ventures. Interested Bidders shall secure the Bid Documents and submit bids as follows:

Activity	Date	Time	Venue
Securing of (a) Eligibility checklist or (b) submission of Letter of Intent and purchase of complete set of Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 10,500.00	From Jan. 13 to 20, 2006	From 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	PRRC, 2F MWSS Engineering Bldg. Kalipunan Road, Old Balara, Quezon City
Securing of additional eligibility information (if any) and inspection of Bidding Documents	From Jan. 13 to 20, 2006	From 9:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m.	
Pre-Bid Conference	Jan. 27, 2006	10:00 a.m.	PRRC, 2F MWSS Engineering Bldg. Kalipunan Road, Old Balara, Quezon City
Deadline for Submission of Bids	March 20, 2006	10:00 a.m.	PRRC, 2F MWSS Engineering Bldg. Kalipunan Road, Old Balara, Quezon City
Opening of Bids	March 20, 2006	10:30 a.m.	PRRC, 2F MWSS Engineering Bldg. Kalipunan Road, Old Balara, Quezon City

4. The National Housing Authority (NHA) shall be the implementing agency of the Project.
5. Bidding (Eligibility Check/Prequalification, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract) shall be conducted on the basis of local competitive bidding among interested Bidders from ADB eligible source countries as defined under the "Guidelines for Procurement by the Asian Development Bank and its Borrowers" pursuant to the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," to the extent it is consistent with the Asian Development Bank's procedures.
6. The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids anytime prior to Contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) BINGLE H. B. GUTIERREZ
Executive Director

Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission
2F, MWSS Engineering Bldg., Katipunan Road, Old Balara, Quezon City 1105
Tel. Nos. 433-3444 and 433-3447, Fax No. 926-5234
Email Address: prrc@tri-isys.com
(PDI – January 3 and 10, 2006)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Your word is a lamp for my steps
and a light for my path.
– Ps. 119:105

CARLOS ROEPER WILSON

entered into the light of life to join the Lord of Light and his wife **LUCRECIA LOPEZ,** *on the 31st of December 2005 at the age of 69.*

His children, **STELLA, RONA, MISEL, JOSEPH**; grandchildren **KARL, JJ, MARJ, DONITA, TOBY, PAOLO, JUSTIN, JOAQUIN & DAVID**; brother **NORMAN** and sisters **SR. MARY JAMES** and **GLORY**, who had accompanied him on this journey to light, lovingly return him to his Creator.

The wake is at the Good Shepherd Convent Chapel, 1043 Aurora Blvd., Quezon City.

Interment will be today, January 3, 2006 at the Loyola Park, Marikina City after the 2:00 PM Mass.

FRANCISCO ALIKPALA GAA

Peacefully joined our Lord and his wife ***Lety*** *on January 1, 2006 at the age of 75.*

His children **Pinky, Bambi** and **Sonny, Fr. James, Amiel** and **Rachelle**; grandchildren **Mara, Samantha, Zoe** and **Zachary**; and great grandchild **Giorgia** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His ashes are at Sta. Rita Parish, Philam Homes, Quezon City.

Burial mass will be on Wednesday, January 4, 2006 at the Good Shepherd Cathedral, Regalado Avenue, Fairview Park.

God has you in keeping; We have you in our hearts....

CYNTHIA ESTEVANEZ GARCIA-POBRE

Devoted and loving wife of **Baldomero "Monet" Agdamag Pobre**, selfless and compassionate mother to her children and a trusted friend to many, born January 31, 1953, peacefully joined her creator on December 29, 2005 at the age of 52.

Her children **Coy & Aji**; **Chi & Carol**; **Brix & Maja**; **Julius** and **Jinggoy**; grandchildren **Attha, Ayiel, Keolo, Kaira** and **Charlie**, together with her brothers & sisters **Ronnie, Andy, Sonny(†), Dodo(†), Dick, Monching, Dianne, Jo, Pat Jr., Jimmy, Jeanna**; sisters and brothers-in-law; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Pobre's Residence in Bonifacio St. Bagumbayan, Tuguegarao City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, Jan 4, 2006, 9:00 a.m. at Sanctuary Of Peace, Tuguegarao Memorial Park, Tuguegarao City.

George Angelo G. Padolina

now rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord.

He joined our Creator on 01 January 2006 at the age of 52.

He will be missed by his wife, **Elizabeth**; children **George John** and **Joshua John**; mother, **Angelina G. Padolina**; brother and sister-in-law, **William** and **Cristina**; parents-in-law, **Ireneo** and **Virginia Raule**; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, **Jojo** and **Abel Raule, Gary** and **Shirli Raule, Ricky** and **Arlene Dominguez, Larry** and **Nelia Lumanog**; nieces, nephews, grand nephews and other relatives.

His body lies in state at the Faith Chapel, Don Bosco Memorial Chapels, Pasay Road, Makati City.

Interment will be on Thursday, 05 January 2006 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Road, Parañaque after the 1:30 pm necrological service at the Faith Chapel.

"My soul, be at rest in God alone from whom comes my hope." Psalm 62:6

DR. JOSE L. RODULFA, JR. DMD

April 18, 1937 – December 30, 2005

He will be missed by his loving wife **Josefina**; children **Jerome, Jonas, James, Joshua, Joanne, Jericho Joseph, Jessica & Jeremiah**; sister **Evangeline**; in-laws, grandchildren, cousins, relatives and friends.
His body lies in state at the Loyola Memorial Park Chapel 4, Marikina City.
Cremation will be on Thurs., January 5, 2006, 10 a.m. at Loyola Crematorium, Marikina City.

Sister DOLORES (DIVINA) LEAL, ICM

died in the grace of our Lord on January 1, 2006 at the age of 70 on the 42nd year of her religious missionary life.

The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (ICM Sisters), her family, other relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal respose of her soul.

The Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated on January 6, 8 a.m. at the Queen of Peace Chapel, Quezon City.

Interment will follow at the La Loma Catholic Cemetery.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

CLASSIFIEDS

National Food Authority
Regional Office 10
Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City

RO10-2006
Contract for the Supply of
Security Services for NFA-10

Standard Form Number: SF-GOOD-05
Revised on July 28, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The *National Food Authority, Region 10*, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites security agencies to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Contracts for the Supply of Security Services for NFA-Region 10
Location : Office and warehouse structures within the jurisdiction of NFA-Region 10 (NFA-Misamis Oriental/Cagayan de Oro City, Camiguin, Bukidnon and Lanao Norte)
Brief Description : Contract involves the supply of security services for CY 2006 to provinces under operational jurisdiction of NFA Region 10 - Northern Mindanao
Contract Duration : March 2006 - March 2007
Delivery Period : March 2006 - March 2007

CONTRACT NO.	PROVINCE	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF GUARDS	MONTHLY RATE PER GUARD	APPROVED BUDGET CEILING
1.	Misamis Oriental/ Cagayan de Oro City	26	P 11,308.29	P 3,528,186.48
2.	Bukidnon/Camiguin	33	P 10,932.23	P 4,329,163.08
3.	Lanao Norte	12	P 11,308.29	P 1,628,393.76

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding and complemented with key personnel and equipment (owned) available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is incidated in the Eligibility Forms. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids, shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluaton of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

ACTIVITIES	ADDRESS	DATE	TIME
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	2F, NFA-10 Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City	Dec. 28, 2005 to Jan. 6, 2006	8:00 AM 5:00 PM Working Days
2. Pre-Bid Conference	Conference Room, 2F NFA-10 Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City	Jan. 19, 2006	1:30 PM
3. Deadline for Submission and Receipt of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents	Conference Room, 2F NFA-10 Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City	Feb. 01, 2006	1:30 PM
4. Opening of Bids	Conference Room, 2F NFA-10 Regional Office, Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City	Feb. 01, 2006	1:35 PM

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Thousand Pesos Only (P5,000.00) per contract to the Cashier of National Food Authority-Baloy, Cagayan de Oro City.

The National Food Authority, Region 10 assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The ***National Food Authority, Region 10*** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the Bidders.

(Sgd.) **CAMILO D. MAGTRAYO**
BAC-Chairman

(PDI - Dec 28, 2005 & Jan. 3, 2006)

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Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR: (A) AUTHORITY TO UNBUNDLE RATES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 36 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9136; AND (B) APPROVAL OF THE AUTOMATIC FUEL COST ADJUSTMENT (AFCA) WITH PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2005 – 045 RC

CIP II POWER CORPORATION (CIPP)
Applicant.
x- -x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given of the filing on October 21, 2005 by CIP II Power Corporation (CIPP) of an application for: (a) authority to unbundle rates in accordance with Section 36 of Republic Act No. 9136; and (b) approval of the Automatic Fuel Cost Adjustment (AFCA) with prayer for provisional authority.

The Commission has set the said application for hearing on January 19, 2006 at nine o'clock in the morning (9:00 A.M.) at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City.

All interested parties who may wish to comment on or oppose the said application should file their comments and/ or oppositions on or before the date of hearing. Such parties who may wish to have the details of the application and who shall have manifested to the Commission their desire and intention to participate actively in the proceedings, may request that before the date of hearing, they be furnished with copies of the application by the applicant, which is hereby directed to furnish the parties making such request with copies of the application and its attachments. Likewise, any such interested party may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and the Honorables **OLIVER B. BUTALID** and **RAUF A. TAN**, Commissioners, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 11th day of November, 2005 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) **MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTAÑEDA**
Executive Director III

(PDI-Dec 27, 2005 & Jan. 3, 2006)

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Attorney for Petitioner

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

In the Matter of the Adoption Petition of) No. 105 A 019531
)
) CITATION TO APPEAR AT HEARING
SAMSON D. AGBAYANI) (Family Code S8604b)
Adopting Parent,)

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
To LUISITO S. TABURADA:

YOU ARE CITED to appear at 9:00 a.m. on Feb. 10, 2006, in Department 60 of the above-entitled court, located at 115 Terraine Street, San Jose, California. At that time and place, you must show cause why the petition of SAMSON D. AGBAYANI to adopt your minor child, KACYS LUV F. TABURADA, should not be granted without your consent in the above-entitled proceeding, on the ground that you have abandoned that child. The adoption petition alleges that for a period of one year after April, 2003, you willfully failed to communicate with, and pay for the care, support and education of, the above child although you were able to do so. A copy of the petition is on file with the court.

YOU ARE FURTHER ADVISED that if you appear at the above hearing and wish to have legal counsel but are unable to afford counsel, the court will appoint counsel on your behalf

Dated : Dec. 8, 2005 . Clerk of the Superior Court
By : B. Forbes
Deputy Clerk

CITATION TO APPEAR AT HEARING

(PDI - Dec. 20 & 27, 2005 & Jan. 3 & 10, 2006)

Food Development Center holds seminar workshop

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY'S FOOD Development Center (FDC) will conduct a seminar workshop on "Understanding Sampling Plans and Uncertainty Measurements in a Food Microbiology Laboratory" on Jan.19 to 20, at the Food Development Center Compound, FTI Complex, Taguig City. Two of the least understood concepts in Quality Assurance (QA) of laboratory testing involve sampling plan development and uncertainty measurement. The course is designed to assist participants in the areas of sampling plan development and uncertainty measurement. Laboratory managers, analysts, microbiologists, technical and quality control staff are enjoined to attend. The principal lecturer for the seminar workshop is Dr. Manuel M. Garcia, a former senior research scientist of the Animal Diseases Research Institute, Agriculture Canada and an internationally recognized microbiologist and food safety expert. The course fee is P5,000.00 per person. For further inquiries, contact Amelia S. Bautista, Food Development Center, National Food Authority, FTI Complex, Taguig City at tel. nos. 838-4014 to 16; 838-4601; 838-4478 and fax nos. 838-4016-17 and 838-4692.

"He will swallow up death in victory,
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces."
- Isaiah 25:8

Secretary Angelo T. Reyes,
officials and employees of the
Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG),
including the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM),
Philippine National Police (PNP),
Philippine Public Safety College (PPSC),
Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP),
Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP),
Local Government Academy (LGA),
Patrol 117 Commission
and Regional Offices

express their heartfelt condolences
and sympathy to the family of

ROBERT Z. BARBERS

DILG Secretary

(April 16, 1996 to February 3, 1998)

Who peacefully joined his Creator
on 25 December 2005 at the age of 61.

The DILG family joins the bereaved family, wife **Virginia**;
children: **Gov. Robert Lyndon**, **Rep. Robert Ace**,
PTA Gen. Mgr. Robert Dean and **Mary Grace**;
daughters-in-law **Tricia**, **Badette** and **Nana**;
son-in-law **Lauro Baja III**; grandchildren;
parents, **Ret. Judge Felix** and former **Vice Gov. Regina**;
siblings **Jojo**, **Alan**, **June**, **Doris** and **Hope**,
in prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

Necrological services will be held today at 7:00 p.m.
at the PNP Multi-Purpose Center, Camp Crame, Quezon City.

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."
- Philippians 1:21

PDIC to unload EIB's bad assets worth ₱10B

Bank to get fresh infusion from Indonesia, HK investment firms

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURance Corp. is set to unload the bad assets of Export Industry Bank worth P10 billion, which the bank inherited from the defunct Urban Bank group.

"With the disposal of these nonperforming assets and the new capital of P3 billion, the bank will reflect a stronger balance sheet and a risk-based capital adequacy ratio well within the BSP (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas)-prescribed ratio for commercial banks," EIB yesterday said in its disclosure.

The bank will get a fresh infusion from major stockholders led by the Lippo group of Indonesia and the local Yao group.

Also, Extra Year Investments Ltd., the designated investment vehicle of the RZB group of Austria and AO Capital Partners Ltd. of Hong Kong, will be sinking in fresh capital.

The additional capital is intended to shore up the bank's capital base, and to comply with the new international accounting standards as well as the Philippine financial reporting requirements on the capital of banks now being implemented by the BSP.

The bad assets the PDIC would be taking out from the Export Bank were acquired from Urban Bank Inc. and Urbancorp Investments Inc.

EIB absorbed Urban Bank in 2002.

"These transactions will significantly reduce the EIB's [non-performing assets], thereby improving the bank's profitability," EIB said.

In an interview, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the Monetary Board had already approved the asset take-out during previous meetings.

The bank and its major stockholders who would infuse the additional capital of P3 billion signed a memorandum of agreement with the PDIC last Dec. 29.

The agreement covered the terms and conditions for the capital infusion, and the sale of the non-performing assets, acquired from Urban Bank, to PDIC.

EIB is also set to undertake a revaluation and reclassification of its common shares, the redefinition of the conversion features of the preferred shares and the restructuring of its capital stock by increasing its authorized capital stock to P7.5 billion to provide for the entry of additional equity investment.

EIB's new capital shall consist of P6 billion in common shares and P1.5 billion in preferred shares.

To implement the reorganization, a special stockholders meeting will be held on Jan. 25.

Also during the meeting, the stockholders will decide whether to implement the requisite amendments to the bank's charter, which will pave the way for the reorganization.

Government all set to raise VAT to 12%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS already met the two requirements stated under the VAT Reform Law, allowing authorities to raise the value added tax rate from 10 to 12 percent this year, according to the Department of Finance.

Under the new VAT law, the government could raise the VAT rate by two percentage points if it met either of the two conditions: a VAT collection-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio of at least 2.9 percent, and a budget deficit-to-GDP ratio of at least 1.5 percent.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves told reporters that, based on preliminary data, the two conditions had been met.

"Assuming that the deficit hits P160 billion and GDP is P5.3 trillion, then that already translates to a deficit-to-GDP ratio of 3 percent," Teves said.

Official figures on the VAT-to-GDP and deficit-to-GDP ratios will be available by the end of January.

Once the figures are in, the increase in the VAT rate may be implemented on Feb. 1 as scheduled, Teves said.

The VAT Reform Law aims to improve the national government's fiscal standing by generating additional revenues. The law basically expanded the coverage of the tax to include oil and electricity, among others, starting last Nov. 1. The law also provided for the increase in the VAT rate this year.

The DOF estimated that the tax measure, the centerpiece of the Arroyo administration's fiscal reform agenda, would generate P81.4 billion in additional revenues every year starting 2006.

Q1-Q3 garments exports up 4.6%

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE REMOVAL OF THE GLOBAL GARMENTS quota system resulted in a 4.6-percent growth in Philippine exports to $2.13 billion in the 10 months ending October last year.

The Garments and Textiles Export Board reported that October exports grew 27 percent to $207.7 million from $162.65 million in the same month last year.

GTEB last week ceased operations as its main responsibility of managing quotas ended when the world's major importing countries scrapped the quota system starting Jan. 1, 2005.

The Board of Investments is now managing GTEB's other functions of developing the industry through the formulation of strategies, consultations with players, labor relations and investment promotion.

GTEB expects 2005 earnings to grow 8 percent considering the expected 25-percent revenue growth in November and December.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila, who is also BOI Chair, said the garments business was now driven by free market forces, rather than limiting rules such as quotas.

"The (removal of the quotas) opened new opportunities, especially in the European market and also in specialty product categories in the United States," Favila said. "These in turn, resulted in overall export growth."

Garments industry earnings accounted for about 6.3 percent of total exports in the 10 months to October, which hit $33.76 billion.

The official said the industry's performance so far showed the "resilience and creativity of Filipino garments and textile business people working with a responsible labor force that adapts to the challenges of the new global business environment."

He added that with the government's improved integrated service approach and its partnership with the private sector, 2006 promises to be an even better year for the industry.

However, GTEB data showed that exports to the US from January to October reached about $1.62 million or 1.8 percent lower than the previous period's $1.48 billion.

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Learn the basics for setting up your own information and communication infrastructure with minimum pain and maximum performance.

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☐ 2 February 7, 2006. 9 am to 5 pm. Richmonde Hotel, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Wire (or unwire) your business, link your office PCs together, and keep in touch with your personnel at all times.

PUTTING YOUR COMPANY ON THE INTERNET MAP
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Everything you wanted to know about e-commerce, the Philippine online business environment, and what you need to get on the internet map.

FROM PAPER TO DIGITAL
☐ 4 March 14, 2006. 9 am to 5 pm. Linden Suites, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Reduce your paperwork, get rid of bulky records, and free up your office space by going digital.

BUILDING YOUR MOBILE OFFICE
☐ 5 March 30, 2006. 9 am to 5 pm. Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati City
Make the most of mobile technologies to maximize the productivity of your sales and field personnel outside the office space.

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For reservations, please fax this form to 759-2022 to 24 or email details to editors@pcmag.ph

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PAINLESS way to rejuvenate /C3

LIFESTYLE

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart)
or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ● TUESDAY **FITNESS** ● WEDNESDAY **2BU** ● THURSDAY **FOOD** ● FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

Brand-new you for the new year

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

START THE YEAR right with a regimen that will allow you to feel the benefits after only seven days.

The abuses and excesses of the year before are history now, so it's time to rewrite your wellness plan if you like to live better and longer.

Our bodies allow us to do what we have to do and go where we want to go, and they are with us up to the very end. They are not replaceable and cannot be traded in.

It's time to reward our bodies with healthy pampering by giving our internal systems a rest.

Did you know…

That remnants of the food you ate even as a child may still be inside you?

It is a fact known to experts in the field of holistic/alternative medicine that not all foods are easily digestible. Thus, they leave encrustation along the sides of the stomach. Continuous intake of high-fat foods may add to the problem, eventually creating a breeding ground for bacteria and infection.

Rate yourself

Need to find out where you are in the urgency check list? (Give yourself 3 points for A, 2 points for B, 1 point for C.)

How do you rate your current diet?
a) very healthy
b) fairly healthy
c) bad

How are your energy levels?
a) good
b) ok
c) low

Which best describes your activity levels?
a) regular exercise and/or active job/life
b) some exercise but sedentary job
c) no exercise and sedentary job

How much water do you drink per day?
a) 8-10 glasses
b) 3-4 glasses
c) less than 3 glasses

How much canned drinks (cola, soda, etc.), tea, coffee do you drink per day?
a) few/none
b) 3
c) 6 or more

How much alcohol do you drink per week (one unit= medium glass of wine, pint of beer, one measure of spirits)?
a) 4-6 units
b) 8-12 units
c) 15 units or more

How much fruits/vegetables do you eat a day?
a) 3-4 portions
b) 1-2 portions
c) 1- none

Scores above 14—you can begin on a detoxification program without any problem. Scores below 14—you need to make some changes now before undergoing detox by:

- Starting with a mild exercise (brisk walk, jog or run up and down the stairs five times or 20 minutes daily)
- Drinking eight to 10 glasses of water daily
- Reducing alcohol intake by half
- Reducing intake of unhealthy beverages
- Increasing intake of fruits and vegetables to five times a day or, if this may be too challenging, three times a day

Mental, physical preparation

- Think about the results of your new health program even before you start. This would be a great motivation to you.
- Repeat to yourself this affirmation: "I love myself by doing this."
- Go to your refrigerator and start removing all the junk food. Replace with healthy food stuff. Exchange the cakes and sweets with fruit. Add beet roots, carrots, assorted greens (preferably romaine lettuce, sprouts, tomatoes, nuts, legumes/beans, lemons).
- Choose a hot spice (chili, cayenne, lemon grass, ginger) to make into tea.
- Make sure you have plenty of filtered water.

Beginner's program

- Drink a cup of warm water and one teaspoon of lemon juice first thing each morning (or one tablespoon of apple cider vinegar in a cup).
- Drink a glass of water every hour.
- Take a vegetable juice daily.
- Take only brown/red rice daily.
- Have a raw salad daily.
- Do not skip meals. Eat light but right.
- Supplements: multivitamins—take one after your heaviest meal.
- Add kelp to your diet, which provides the body with iodine that regulates your metabolism.
- Minimize your dairy intake; replace cow's milk with items like goat's milk/cheese, soya milk, rice milk, sheep's milk/cheese.
- Eat more fish each day. Eliminate red meat and minimize pork intake.
- Do deep breathing for five minutes.
- Smile at yourself in the mirror every morning.
- Have 10 minutes of relaxation/meditation daily, morning and evening.
- Say three to five affirmations daily.
- Laugh with gusto once daily.
- Visualize a happy you each day.

Don't just begin with your right foot, make it your best.

Love and light!

(Reference: "Detox Yourself" by Jane Scrivner)

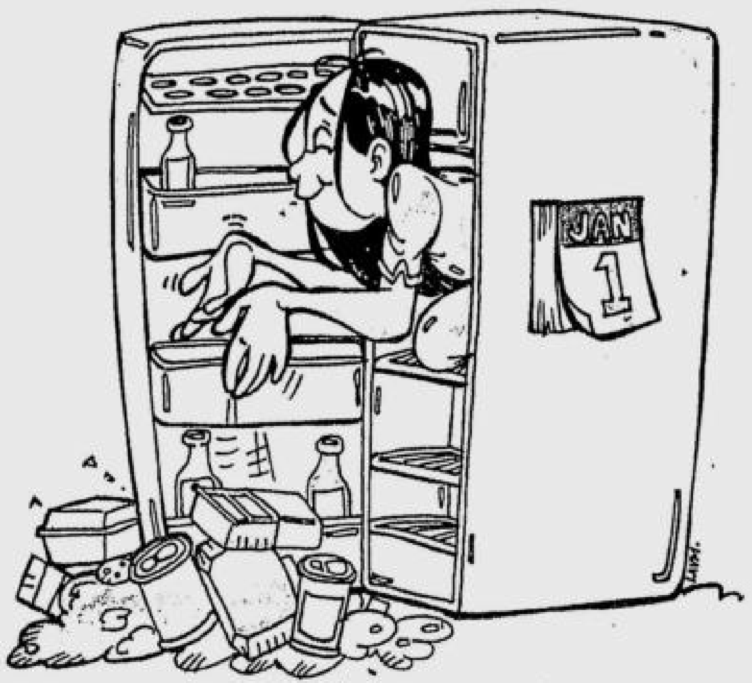

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY MISTADES

Fitness trends for 2006

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

IN 1997, THE WALL Street Journal dubbed the American Council on Exercise (ACE) as the "workout watchdog" for the fitness industry.

This nonprofit fitness advocacy foundation has sponsored many independent university-based studies on infomercial fitness products and popular workouts to give the public unbiased information on what really works.

ACE is also the largest organization that certifies fitness professionals all over the world. It conducts examinations twice a year here in the Philippines to keep Filipino instructors up to par with their peers abroad.

ACE makes yearly forecasts on the general direction that the fitness industry is going. Its forecast for 2006 is based on a survey of 50,000 certified fitness professionals worldwide.

Sport-specific

Competitive athletes have long learned the value of sport-specific training or fitness programs specifically designed for their sport. ACE says, "A sport-specific training program involves focusing on the specific skills associated with an activity (e.g. tennis players strengthening the rotator cuff muscles to improve their serve), while improving cardiovascular endurance, muscle strength, core stability, and flexibility."

It sees more and more kid and teenage athletes employing personal trainers to improve their game and prevent injuries.

Flexible personal training

A decade ago, personal training was only for the rich and famous. But fitness consumers realized that personal trainers could help them achieve their fitness goals more quickly and effectively.

Personal training, however, does not come cheap. That's why more flexible options were developed. Many fitness centers now offer small-group training for two to five individuals. This is a practical and economical way of getting quality fitness supervision.

Another trend is families working out together under the professional guidance of a personal trainer either at home or in a fitness club.

Older adults

If you start seeing more senior citizens pumping iron or striking a yoga pose, you are observing a growing interest in "older adult fitness." ACE encourages seniors to work out because a well-balanced fitness program can "condition muscles, tendons, ligaments and bone to help fight osteoarthritis and osteoporosis, keep the body more limber, stabilize the joints and lower the risk of everyday injury."

Personal training is particularly important for older adults who need special attention due to conditions like hypertension, diabetes and heart disease. For older individuals with orthopedic problems, a physical therapist with a fitness training background is a good choice.

Simple exercise habits

According to ACE, simple exercise habits like daily walks remain popular. This is no surprise since many people do not have the time for formal exercise sessions. ACE

FITNESS/ C4

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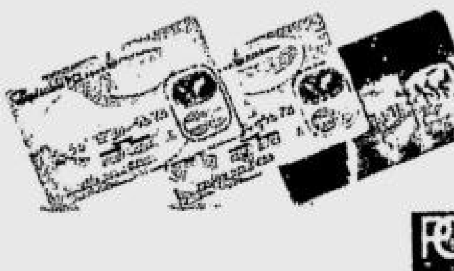
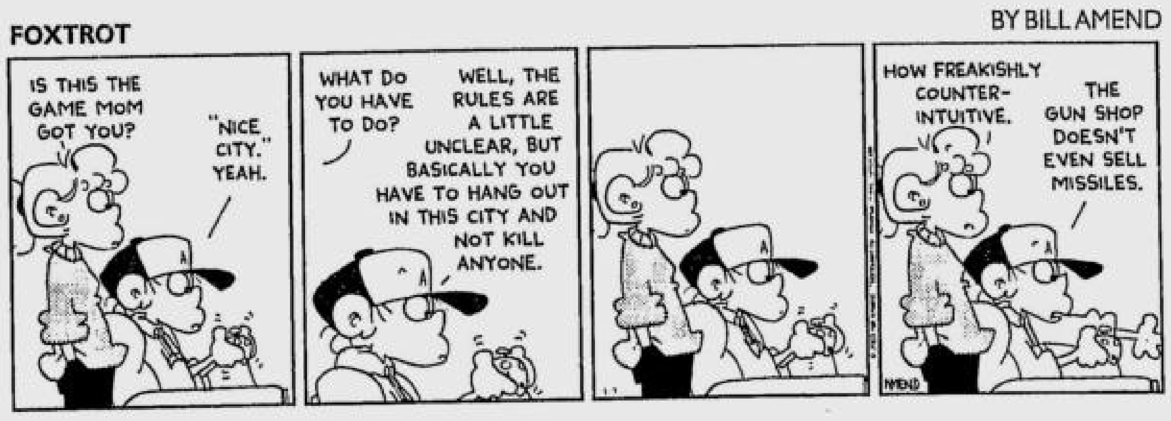
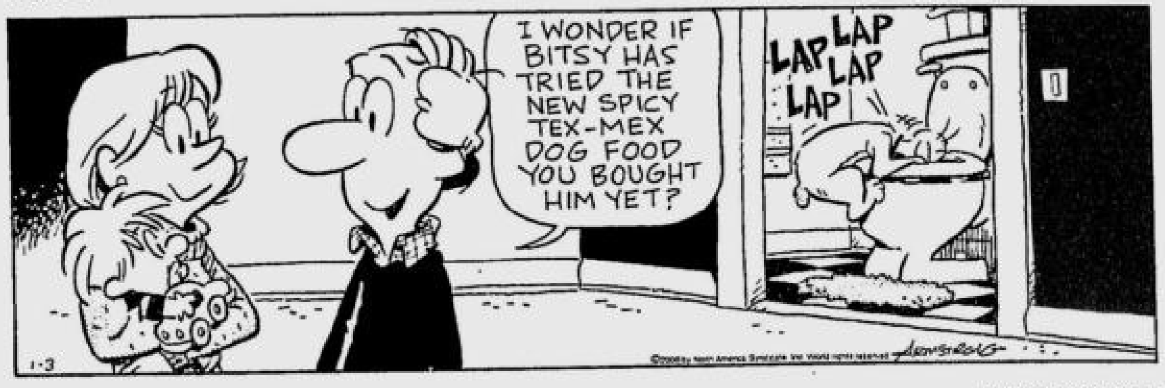


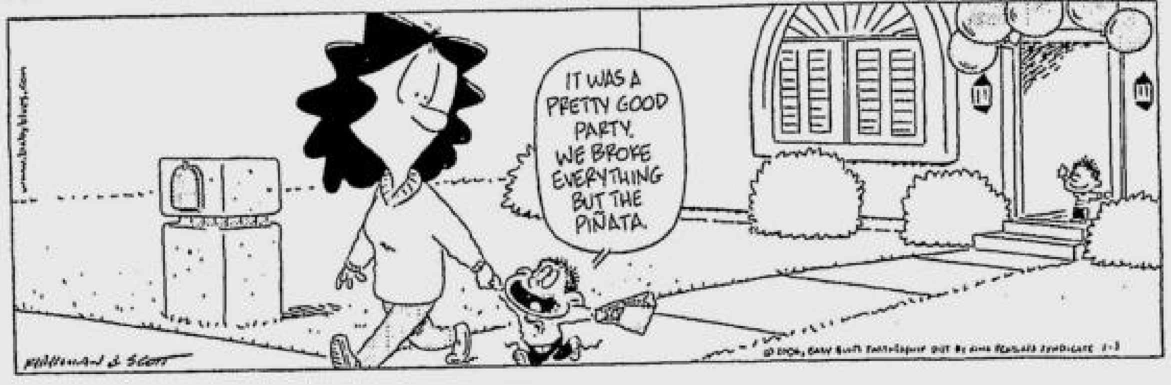
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


IS THIS THE GAME MOM GOT YOU?
"NICE CITY." YEAH.
WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO?
WELL, THE RULES ARE A LITTLE UNCLEAR, BUT BASICALLY YOU HAVE TO HANG OUT IN THIS CITY AND NOT KILL ANYONE.
HOW FREAKISHLY COUNTER-INTUITIVE.
THE GUN SHOP DOESN'T EVEN SELL MISSILES.
AMEND

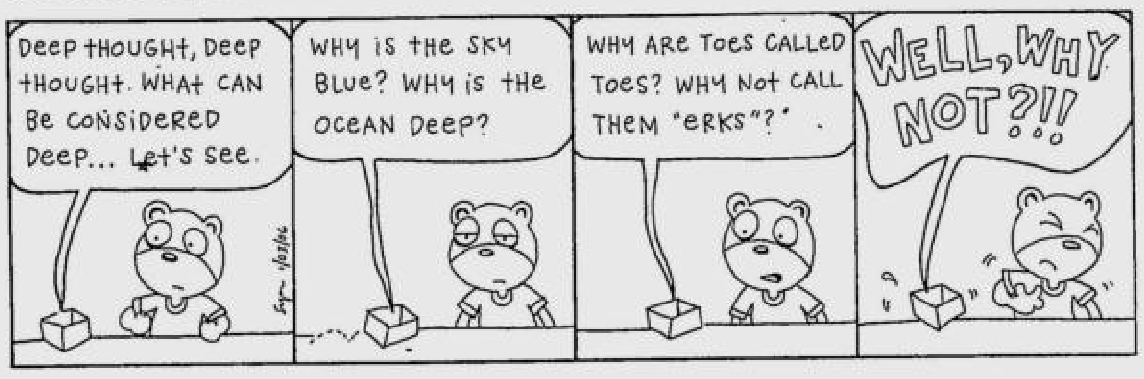
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I WONDER IF BITSY HAS TRIED THE NEW SPICY TEX-MEX DOG FOOD YOU BOUGHT HIM YET?
LAP LAP LAP LAP
1-3

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


IT WAS A PRETTY GOOD PARTY. WE BROKE EVERYTHING BUT THE PIÑATA.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Deep thought, Deep thought. What can be considered Deep... Let's see.
Why is the sky Blue? Why is the ocean Deep?
Why are Toes called Toes? Why Not call them "erks"?
WELL, WHY NOT?!!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're not a quitter. Whatever you pursue, you give it 100 percent. This attitude of devotion will bring you great accomplishment. You have strong opinions and are highly persuasive. You're entertaining and charming (and sometimes known as a storyteller). You enjoy being active with groups. You will have to make an important choice this year. Choose wisely.
Birthdate of: Mel Gibson, actor; J.R.R. Tolkien, writer; Steven Stills, singer/songwriter.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Work behind the scenes as much as possible today. You'll feel better if you do. Privately, you feel a bit rebellious and very independent.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): A friend can definitely surprise you today. Alternatively, you could meet somebody new who is completely surprising and bizarre. Stay open to all possibilities.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Something sudden and unusual might occur that briefly puts you in the limelight today. It will certainly call attention to you. It could be as insignificant as breaking something in a supermarket—crash!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You very much have your own ideas today. Nobody will be able to convince you otherwise. Something different and unusual seems to intrigue you now. You're exploring new stuff.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Something might suddenly occur that makes you lose or break something that somebody else owns. (Not good.) On the other hand, somebody might suddenly give you something! (Very good.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Conversations with partners and close friends hold a few surprises today. Somebody might be quite feisty. Don't push the river. Gently does it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Try to be cooperative with co-workers today. This is not a good day to quit your day job. Computer crashes, power outages and technological glitches are likely.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Love at first sight could happen today. (Maybe it's love at second sight.) Something exciting occurs with some kind of flirtation. Parents must be vigilant about children, because it's an accident-prone day.

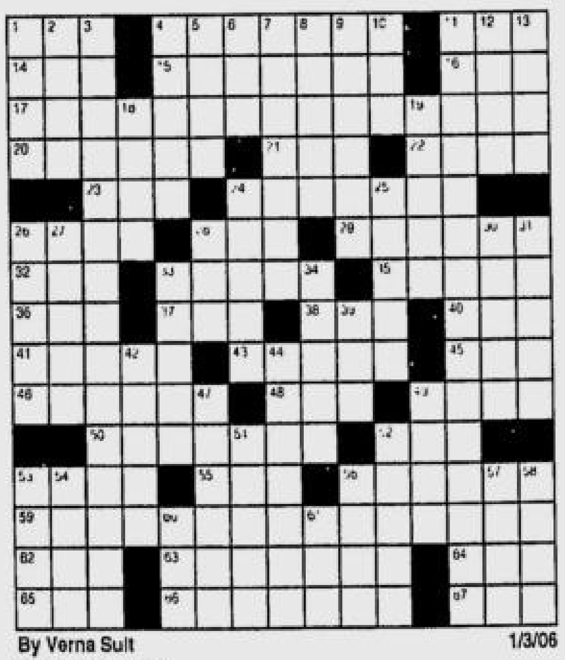
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Avoid domestic accidents today. Little slipups, goofy mistakes and breakage to dishes or minor things could occur. Similarly, family arguments might suddenly flare up. Be patient.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Today Mercury moves into your sign, where it will stay for three weeks. This gives you an urgent desire to communicate to others. (It's hard to keep your shirt on when you're getting something off your chest.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Impulse purchases are likely today. You might also find money. Be careful—you might also lose money. Little surprises related to your finances are inevitable.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today the Moon is in your sign, and it lines up with unpredictable Uranus. This makes you restless and impulsive, (No big deal.)

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Verna Suit
Silver Spring, MD
1/3/06

ACROSS
1 Tip
4 Erte's style
11 Winter bug
14 Pooh pal
15 Get back on
16 Loser to DDE
17 Three ways
20 Merited
21 Bishopric
22 "Exodus" writer
23 X
24 Somewhat embarrassed
26 Sticking place
28 For each
29 Workout clothes
32 Author Stout
33 Lavish meal
35 Map dot
36 Cummerbund cousin
37 Lamb's father
38 Sutton of the PGA
40 Tony Randall movie, "7 Faces of Doctor _"
41 Italian isle
43 Hold things up?
45 Psychic's letters
46 Hebrew prophet
48 With it
49 Fires
50 Grazes
52 Bottle top
53 Odds & ends
55 Hold up
56 __ and feathered
59 Three ways
62 Band engagement
63 City on the Rhine
64 Madrid Mrs.
65 Half a fly?
66 Cut dead
67 Salty sauce

DOWN
1 Kathryn of "Law and Order: CI"
2 Asta's mistress
3 Three ways
4 "As You Like It" forest
5 Shipping dept. stamp
6 TV guide abbr.
7 Extinguishers
8 Facilitated
9 Confessions of faith
10 Uneven
11 Three ways
12 First name in jeans
13 Applies
18 From the top
19 Tricks
24 Packs of paper
25 Statement of intention
26 Spring blooms
27 McEntire and others
28 Tiny veggie
30 Create big hair
31 Organ settings
33 Tuck's title
34 Massenet opera
39 European high point
42 Nina of scents
44 McQueen film
47 Slugger Killebrew
49 Sr. org.
51 French soldier in WWI
52 Reconnoitered
53 NCO rank
54 Addiction: suff.
56 Daly of "Judging Amy"
57 Architect Saarinen
58 6/6/44
60 Certain colas
61 CIA adversary, once

Monday's Puzzle Solved

A	H	A	■	J	U	D	G	E	■	C	O	N	D	O
S	E	N	■	U	S	U	A	L	■	A	L	I	E	N
H	I	G	H	S	C	H	O	O	L	D	A	N	C	E
A	F	O	O	T	■	■	■	P	E	E	V	E	■	■
M	E	L	T	■	S	T	R	E	E	T	■	H	E	W
E	R	A	■	E	P	E	E	S	■	■	K	O	L	A
■	■	■	R	E	I	N	S	■	R	O	I	L	E	D
■	H	E	C	O	R	D	P	R	O	B	L	E	M	■
T	E	X	A	C	O	■	E	A	T	E	N	■	■	■
W	E	T	S	■	■	M	C	C	O	Y	■	M	A	R
O	D	E	■	L	O	I	T	E	R	■	Z	E	R	O
■	■	R	A	I	T	T	■	■	■	W	I	D	E	N
Q	U	I	C	K	T	R	A	N	S	I	T	I	O	N
T	B	O	N	E	■	E	M	A	I	L	■	A	L	I
S	I	R	E	N	■	D	A	N	N	Y	■	N	E	E

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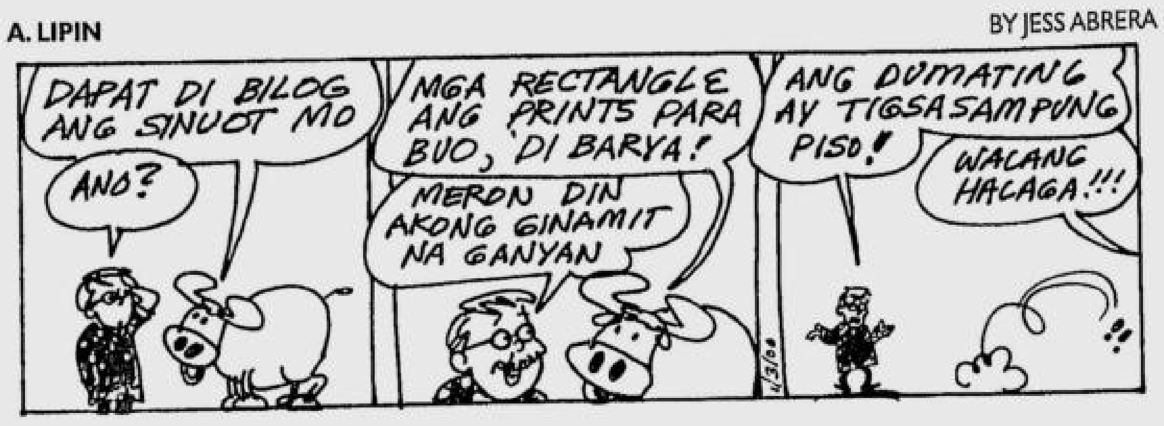
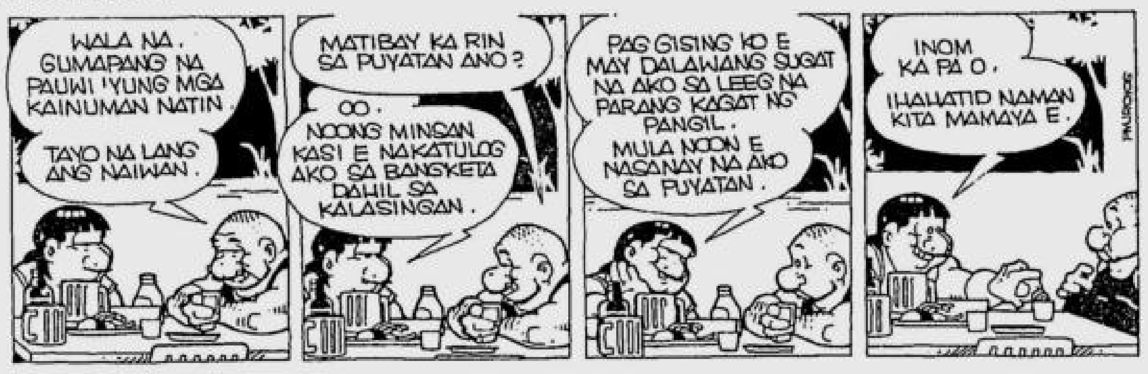
1/3/06

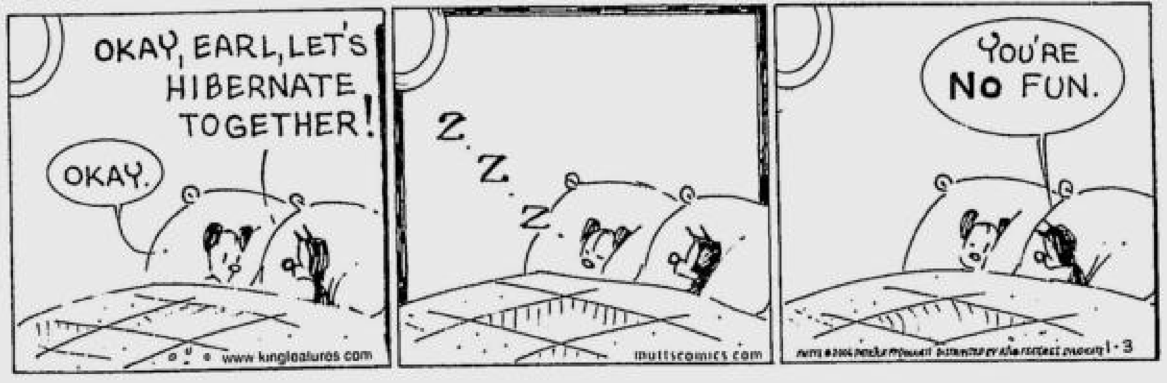
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


DAPAT DI BILOG ANG SINUOT MO
ANO?
MGA RECTANGLE ANG PRINTS PARA BUO, 'DI BARYA!
MERON DIN AKONG GINAMIT NA GANYAN
ANG DUMATING AY TIGSASAMPUNG PISO!
WALANG HAGAGA!!!
1/3/06

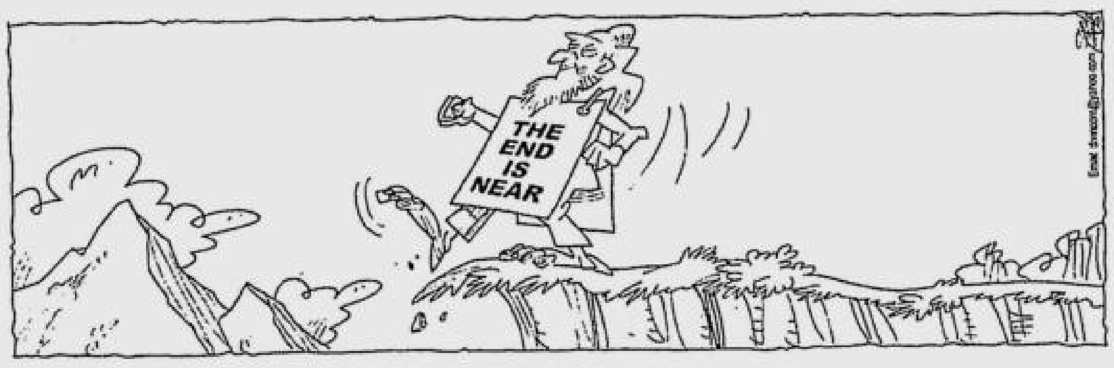
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


WALA NA. GUMAPANG NA PAUWI 'YUNG MGA KAINUMAN NATIN.
TAYO NA LANG ANG NAIWAN.
MATIBAY KA RIN SA PUYATAN ANO?
OO. NOONG MINSAN KASI E NAKATULOG AKO SA BANGKETA DAHIL SA KALASINGAN.
PAG GISING KO E MAY DALAWANG SUGAT NA AKO SA LEEG NA PARANG KAGAT NG PANGIL. MULA NOON E NASANAY NA AKO SA PUYATAN.
INOM KA PA O.
IHAHATID NAMAN KITA MAMAYA E.

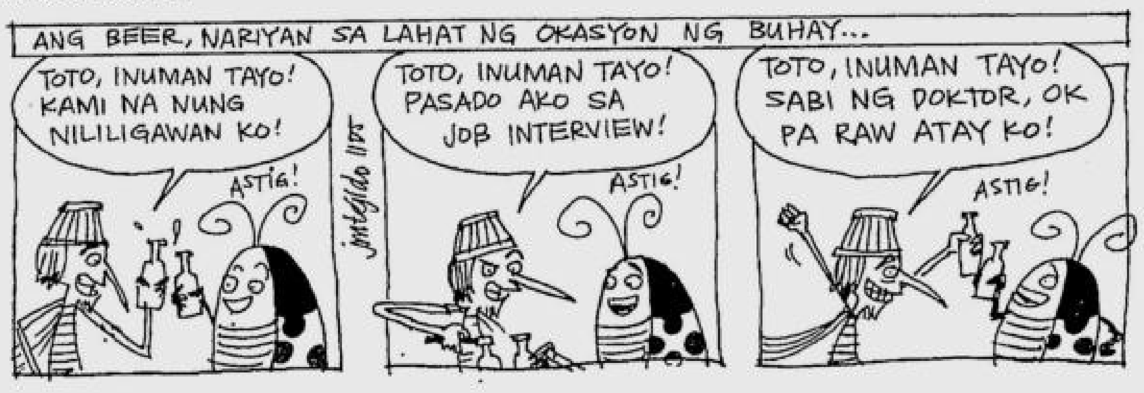
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OKAY, EARL, LET'S HIBERNATE TOGETHER!
OKAY.
Z Z Z
YOU'RE NO FUN.
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
1-3

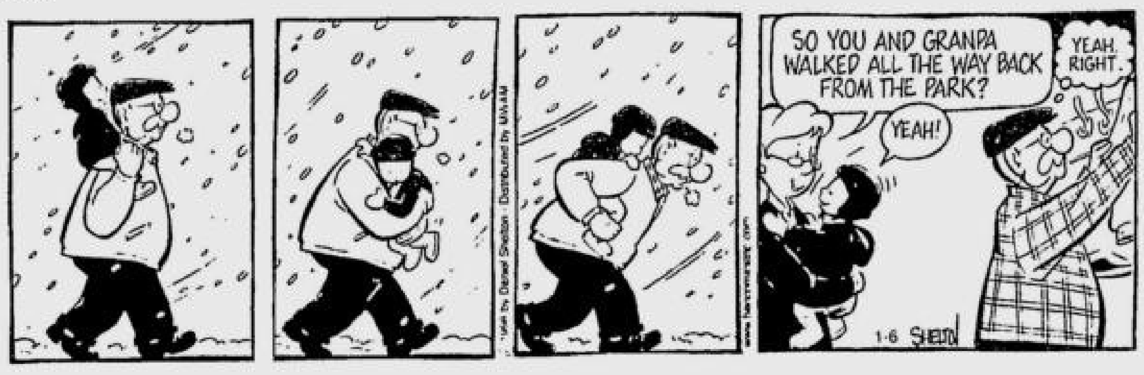
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THE END IS NEAR

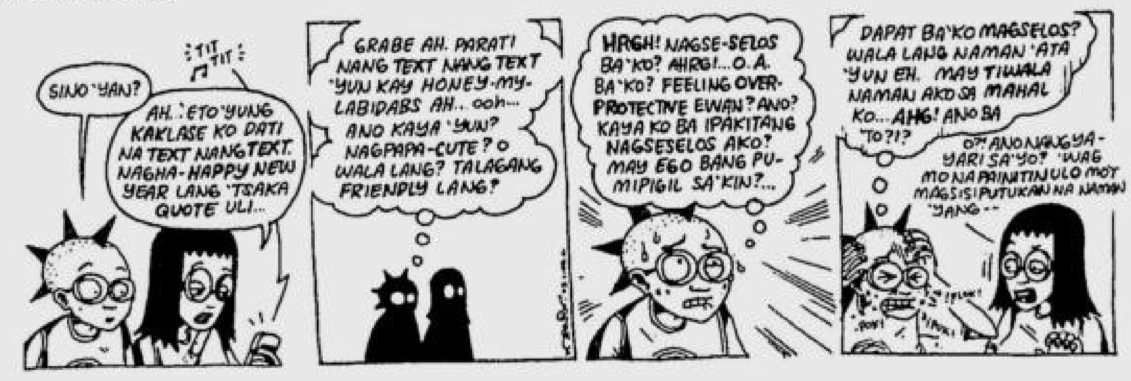
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG BEER, NARIYAN SA LAHAT NG OKASYON NG BUHAY...
TOTO, INUMAN TAYO! KAMI NA NUNG NILILIGAWAN KO!
ASTIG!
TOTO, INUMAN TAYO! PASADO AKO SA JOB INTERVIEW!
ASTIG!
TOTO, INUMAN TAYO! SABI NG DOKTOR, OK PA RAW ATAY KO!
ASTIG!

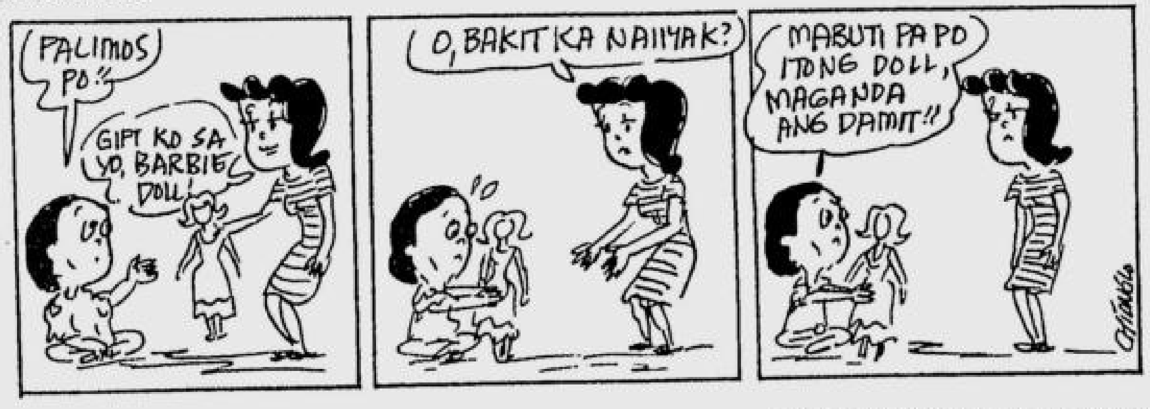
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


SO YOU AND GRANPA WALKED ALL THE WAY BACK FROM THE PARK?
YEAH!
YEAH. RIGHT.
1-6 SHELTON

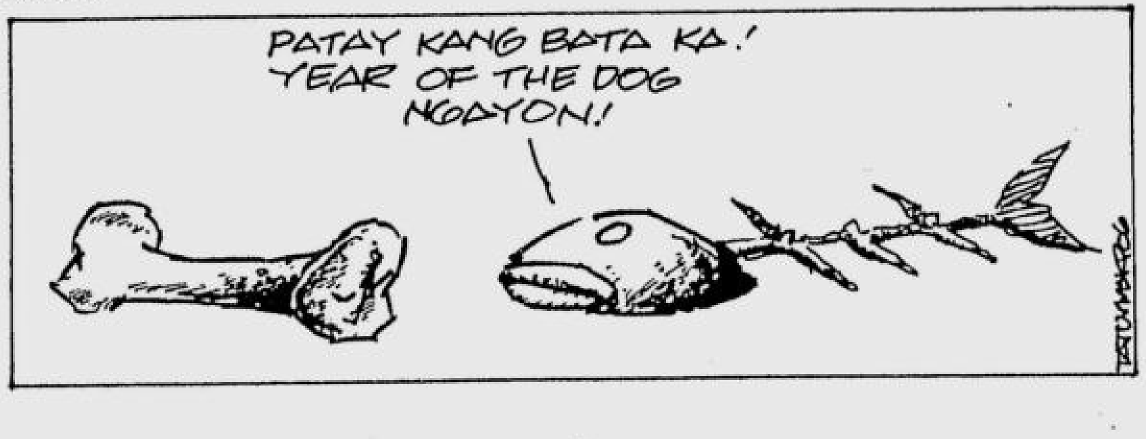
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


SINO 'YAN?
TIT TIT
AH. 'ETO 'YUNG KAKLASE KO DATI NA TEXT NANG TEXT. NAGHA-HAPPY NEW YEAR LANG 'TSAKA QUOTE ULI...
GRABE AH. PARATI NANG TEXT NANG TEXT 'YUN KAY HONEY-MY-LABIDABS AH.. ooh... ANO KAYA 'YUN? NAGPAPA-CUTE? O WALA LANG? TALAGANG FRIENDLY LANG?
HRGH! NAGSE-SELOS BA'KO? AHRG!...O.A. BA'KO? FEELING OVER-PROTECTIVE EWAN? ANO? KAYA KO BA IPAKITANG NAGSESELOS AKO? MAY EGO BANG PUMIPIGIL SA'KIN?...
DAPAT BA'KO MAGSELOS? WALA LANG NAMAN 'ATA 'YUN EH. MAY TIWALA NAMAN AKO SA MAHAL KO... AHG! ANO BA 'TO?!?
O?! ANO NANGYARI SA'YO? 'WAG MO NA PAINITIN ULO MO'T MAGSISIPUTUKAN NA NAMAN 'YANG--

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PALIMOS PO!
GIFT KO SA YO, BARBIE DOLL!
O, BAKIT KA NAIIYAK?
MABUTI PA PO ITONG DOLL, MAGANDA ANG DAMIT!!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


PATAY KANG BATA KA! YEAR OF THE DOG NGAYON!

LORD and Zeny Malveda with their daughter, birthday celebrator Babes Yu, and her son Rudolph

THE GANG: Josie Trinidad, Dindin Sargan, Ces Fonier and Gerty Sanchez

STANDING: Eldest son Ryanne Yu with his guests, Charmaine Bondoc and Andrea Fernandez

HEY, GOOD-LOOKING! Voughn and Dian Yu

Painless way to reclaim your youth

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

WITH THE WORLD'S OBSESSION TO STAY and look young, it's no wonder, *palanggas*, that almost everyone is searching for that fountain of joy that will restore the vibrancy of youth. Well, at least iron out the wrinkles, *n'est-ce pas?*

People found different methods, some causing pain and discomfort to say the least. But they did not mind, *palanggas*, as long as at the end of the line they achieved the looks they were after.

Now we have the Grefas Face Fitness center that is offering a healthier alternative, *palanggas*. Run by the vibrant **Babes Yu**, its president, it makes use of the fab "EST Sonic," a breakthrough skin-cleansing and micro-massaging machine "used for achieving skin that is young-looking, luminous, firm and lifted, using ultrasound vibrations" without causing pain like other facials.

And, before you could bat an eyelash, the center had its launch at the super hip ballroom dancing place, the Ultra Bykes Café at Pasong Tamo in Makati.

Invitees were introduced to the Grefas system with its EST Sonic treatment, its very own Sonic Lotion and Sonic Gel that complement the salon treatment of Grefas, plus loads of other beautiful skin products, *palanggas*.

That night, birthday gal Babes Yu was living proof that the Grefas system worked extremely well. Her glowing youthful skin was enough to convince even *moi*, making her the best endorser of her own business.

Naturellement, no one could be prouder of her achievements than her *famille*, and they were all *trés* visible—her husband, business taipan **Rolly Yu**, and their cool children, **Dian, Ryanne** and **Randolph**; her parents, **Lord** and **Zeny Malveda**; close relatives; the popular rubbing alcohol makers **Ernie Yu** and **Voughn Yu**; **Margaret Yu**; **Marose** and **Linda Lim**, among others.

After the blowing of the birthday candles, it was time to rock and roll! They did, till most of the gals' Manolo Blahniks almost broke off—**Sylvia Ching, Ditas Crisostomo**, dancing lady **Rose Jacob, Edward Rivera, Lyn Oliva, Nila Narciso, Corin Yabut, Ces Fonier; Juliet Genio, Zeny Alcaraz, Lurds Daffon, Daisy Chua, Agnes Lopez, Marirose Locsin**, and super couples **Joey** and **Susie Amistoso** and **Bobby** and **Elsie Trias**.

Check out the Grefas Face Fitness Center at G3 Vivere Suites, Bridgeway Avenue corner Asean Drive, Filinvest Business Park, Alabang, tels. 7711504, 7711547, 0915-7857378.

A new face, anyone?

ALL IN THE FAMILLE: Popular taipan Ernie Yu with close pal Becky Garcia, Babes and Rolly Yu, and Fe Yu

A century and 30

When Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. (HSBC) celebrated its 130th anniversary in our shores, dahlings, it just had to be with a bang!

Cosmo Manille's partying set, together with hot lifestyle editors, dashed to the imposing Makati Shangri-La Hotel where we discovered food stations serving excellent Australian, hot Brazilian, and yummy Spanish food.

Welcoming us were HSBC's popular first couple, CEO **Warner Manning** and his eye-catching blonde wife **Julie M**; **Elaine Dichupa**; HSBC deputy CEO **Martin Cook**; and HSBC SVP for marketing **Suresh Nanoo**.

Apres the excellent lunch, HSBC had the fab fashionable duo, **Tessa Prieto Valdes** and **Celine Lopez**, hosting the program. They had a grand time with pals who love to travel and party around the world, like Kuok Properties' head honcho, dashing **Tom Zita**, and Raintree's **Anabelle Wisniewski**, plus so many others like them; the head-turning trio composed of Metro Society hot men **Philip Cu-Unjieng** and **Raul Manzano**, and flamenco enthusiast, sultry beauty **Astrud Crisologo** who, like us, applauded endlessly the hot flamenco dance by *el muy guapo*, Madrid-based **Isaac de los Reyes**, and the breathless, energetic performance by the students of Escola Brasiliera Capoiera Philippines, led by dark and handsome **Fantasma Coquiero**, dahlings.

HSBC's new promo is called 77 Destinations. It gives anyone who joins—take note, *palanggas*—a chance to win round-trip tickets for two, hotel accommodations, plus US$2,000 pocket money, to any country where there is an HSBC. Now, that's really awesome.

Check out this fantastic promo by texting HSBC to 2600, or log on to www.hsbc.com.ph.

Who knows, *palanggas*? You just might be the next jetsetter, *nes't-ce pas*, as in *di bala*?

BLOWING out another beautiful year is the celebrator, with sons Ryanne and baby Randolph.

BACK: Pals Fe Dixon, Geena Zablan, Mary Grace Katigbak and Nini Pinlac. Seated: Kathy Park, Becky Garcia, the celebrator, and her favorite couturier, Frederick Peralta

MAUREEN Soong and Emil Yap III

HSBC'S first lady, Julie Manning, and Balai Tala's Marivic Concepcion

GANG of three: Eva Abesamis, Jojo Zabarte and Georgie Diaz. Standing: Ethel Timbol, HSBC's Warner Manning and Millet Mananquil

FLAMENCO enthusiast Astrud Crisologo

KUOK'S Tom Zita

MEN of substance: Brilliant marketing man Basil Ong and Kurt Aydin

HAIL, hail, the gang's all here: *Moi*, Celine Lopez, Pepper Teehankee, Tessa Prieto-Valdes, Raul Manzano and HSBC's Laine Santana

PIERRE Calasanz, HSBC's Martin Cook and Lyn Palma

SILK Cocoon's Frances Lim and Metro Society's Lia Bernardo

Happy ang tumatalon, maraming naaabot.

Anong meron ang taong happy?

<a> Energy <b> Stress

Text the letter of your answer to 2910 for a chance to win special prizes.

Promo Period: January 1 to 14, 2006 • Per DOH-BFAD Permit No.0052 Series of 2006

Coincidence or jinx?

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS A jinxed office?

This question arose when National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) director Reynaldo Wycoco died recently following a stroke.

INQUIRER reporter Margaux C. Ortiz said in an article (Dec. 21, 2005) that "almost in succession, NBI directors Antonio Aragon, Santiago Toledo, Federico Opinion Jr. and, now, Reynaldo Wycoco, died while in office."

Aragon, a diabetic, died after complaining of chest pains. Toledo had an enlarged heart and acute pulmonary edema and died of a heart attack. Opinion, also a diabetic, died of kidney failure.

NBI officials consider the deaths purely coincidental. "There's no jinx," they said.

But what is a jinx? An Oxford dictionary defines jinx as "a person or object that is believed to cause bad luck."

What makes a place unlucky? The most common belief is, if somebody dies in a place, especially if violently, then it causes bad luck. Some streets are considered to be "accident prone."

According to some beliefs, if a person has a violent death in a house, office or street, his/her soul tries to capture others or lure them to the same fate for revenge.

The almost consecutive deaths of four NBI directors while in office are considered mere coincidences because there's no logical connection among them. Besides, it was reported that all four officials consulted *feng shui* experts to ensure that the flow of energy in the office was good and would bring good luck.

But *feng shui*, as far as a I know, does not consider geopathic stress or negative rays coming from under the earth where a house or office is located. If a person happens to hold office or sleep on top of a geopathic stress point, that person is likely to get sick, be accident-prone or emotionally unstable. Some suffer the ultimate fate of death.

Geopathic stress has been studied scientifically and proven to cause negative effects, not only on human beings, but also on plants and animals. Perhaps that is what is causing all those deaths at the NBI and not because the place is jinxed.

I remember that when I worked in a large shoe-manufacturing company north of Manila, I replaced a human resource official who did not last long in his job. I, too, resigned after only two years on the job.

My assistant, a competent woman lawyer, refused to occupy the same room believing it to be unlucky, especially the chair we used. She preferred to stay outside the room using her old chair.

Do such beliefs have a basis in fact? If the place or office happens to be located in a geopathically stressed area, or if there are negative spirits haunting it, then yes, it can invite bad luck. Otherwise, it should not bother anyone.

Texts from the grave

Reader Joe Bayani wrote to ask what to do about a dead girlfriend who was sending him text messages from beyond the grave. Here's Joe's intriguing letter:

"Two weeks ago, Carmina, who became my girlfriend (through text messaging), died. After her death, she started sending me text messages.

"During her wake, she continued to text me, telling me how much she loved me. In one of our 'conversations,' she told me she was not dead. After her burial, I thought she would stop (sending text messages). I was wrong. She would usually send me text messages at around 11 in the evening or at midnight.

"Her cousin is now using her SIM (subscriber's information module) card per Carmina's request. I asked her cousin to turn off the phone but Carmina was still able to get through to me. It's funny that she found herself in different places, like her home or a resort.

"I want to ask: Should I continue 'talking' to her? Please enlighten me on this strange event. Thank you."

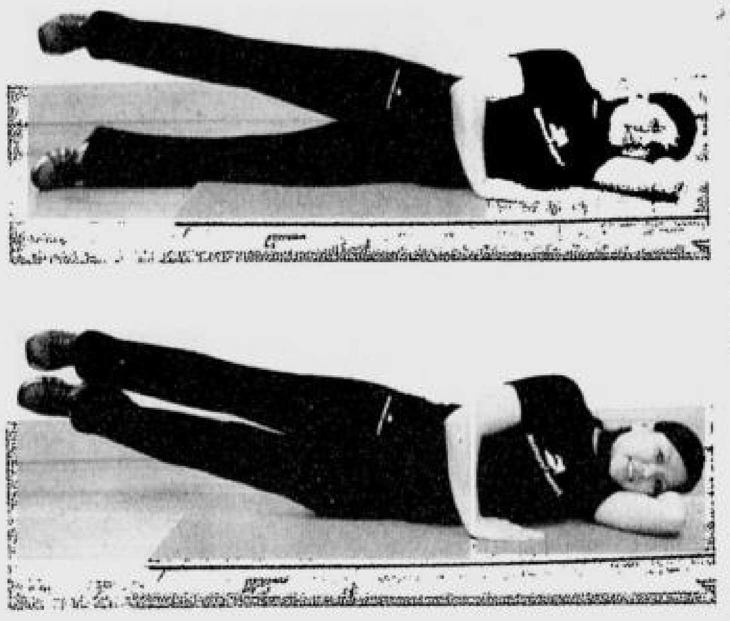
It is quite clear that your friend Carmina's spirit is earthbound. She's either not aware she's dead, or she refuses to acknowledge that fact. Earthbound spirits have unfinished business on earth. Their consciousness is focused on the people left behind.

It would be best for you to answer the text messages of Carmina, telling her you love her, too, but she's now on the other side and must accept her fate. There are relatives and loved ones waiting for her in the spirit world to help her in the transition. She should rest in peace and leave the past behind her. She should seek and go to the light. Her relatives are waiting for her there.

For information on regular mind power, intuition development, and soulmates seminars I conduct, please call 8107245 or 8926806.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Pilates side leg lift series 1



THIS PILATES EXERcise strengthens the obliques (muscles that crisscross the waist), as well as the hips and inner thigh muscles.

Equipment:

Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

1. Lie on your side with your legs together in line with your hips and shoulders.
2. Rest your head on your bent bottom arm and place your top hand in front of your chest on the mat with your palm flat and your fingertips facing your head.
3. Lift the top leg and hold it steady. Then, lift the bottom leg.
4. Slowly lower both legs back to the mat.

Performance tips:

1. Always contract your abdominal muscles first before you lift your legs to protect your lower back.
2. Breathing: Inhale as you lift the top leg followed by the bottom leg. Exhale as you lower both to the mat.
3. Foot position: Point your feet as you lift top and bottom leg. Flex your feet as you lower the legs down.
4. Avoid jerking. Move slowly with control as you lift and lower legs.
5. Keep your shoulder and hip from rolling forward or backwards as you lift your legs by contracting your abdominal muscles and visualizing a glass of water on your shoulder and hip.
6. Always lengthen and elongate your legs as you lift.
7. Try to bring your ankles together when you lift the bottom leg to join the top leg. This makes you strongly contract your inner thigh muscles.
8. This is an advanced exercise. Do not attempt this if you have a history of lower back problems. Ask your doctor first.

Repetitions:

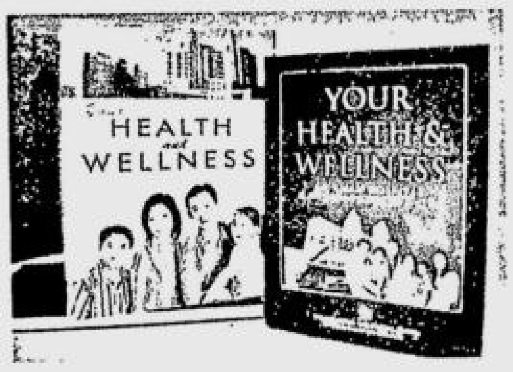
Do 5-10 repetitions on each side.

Book gives healthy living tips

THE "HEALTH AND WELLNESS: AN ASIAN Hospital and Medical Center Guide" is now in bookstores. The coffee-table book, which lists the full medical services and features of Asian Hospital, provides practical medical tips and quick information on healthy living.

The 134-page hard-bound guidebook offers relevant and accurate health information reviewed by medical experts. It contains information on certain diseases and their treatment.

"The Health and Wellness: An Asian Hospital and Medical Center Guide" is now available at National Bookstore and PowerBooks outlets.



Pain-free morning after

A HANGOVER DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THE inevitable consequence of a huge celebration like New Year with all the drinking involved.

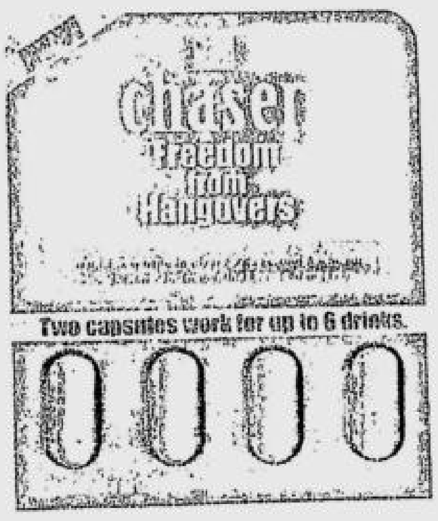
With Chaser caplet, the morning after need not be one of misery.

Chaser caplets are all-natural, clinically proven hangover solutions designed to prevent hangovers. Two Chaser caplets before your first drink will let you wake up refreshed the next day with no nausea, no fatigue, no headaches.

A recent survey shows that just 3.2 drinks will already cause some type of illness in most people, and about 10 percent of drinkers feel bad just after one or two drinks.

Chaser absorbs the harmful elements in beer, wine and spirits that cause hangover. It consists of activated calcium carbonate and vegetable carbon that act like a sponge to soak up those substances.

The harmful elements, called congeners, account for the flavor, aroma and color of alcoholic beverages. Headaches occur because the immune system releases chemicals to rid the body of these substances.



Chaser was given by the United States' Food and Drug Administration the GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) rating. Clinical trials showed it could help prevent 17 common hangover symptoms including headache, nausea and fatigue.

Chaser is available at all GNC outlets and select Mercury Drug stores.

Fitness trends for 2006

From page C1

recommends a minimum of 60 minutes of exercise daily. Many studies show that this requirement can be broken down into 10-minute sessions and still have good benefits for general health and wellbeing.

Balance training

ACE predicts that balance training will continue to be a strong trend and will be the fastest growing and most popular exercise options for adults. Programs include tai chi, Pilates, yoga and ballet-inspired exercises. Equipment include foam rollers, stability balls, Bosu balls, wobble boards, gliding discs.

Office fitness

ACE reports, "A growing number of corporations are offering wellness programs to its workers in an effort to encourage physical activity, sensible nutrition habits, and an overall healthier lifestyle."

Corporate fitness programs have positive effects on financial bottom lines, according to many studies, because they reduce absenteeism and increase productivity.

Healthier restaurants

ACE observes that since many Americans want to know what's in their meals, restaurants now list nutritional content on their menus.

I hope local restaurants follow this trend (a few have already hopped on the bandwagon) because the nutritional information will greatly help people make healthier food choices.

Fusion classes

So many exercise programs are available but time for doing them all is limited so fusion classes blending several workout styles in one session are becoming quite popular. It is common to see a workout that combines ballet leg exercises with upper body weight training.

ACE notes that fusion classes also combine traditional elements of a fitness regimen with many key features of mind-body activities like proper posture, breathing, and body awareness.

Functional fitness

Fitness is meant to make us function better in real life. "Functional fitness training" means exercises using multiple muscle groups to challenge coordination, balance, strength and endurance instead of just focusing on one muscle at a time like in traditional weight training.

For more information on ACE certifying exams, call the Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines at 9202762 or 0917-5181202.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

Holiday treats can lead to excess weight

THOSE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR treats were probably irresistible but you might need expert help to shed those extra pounds you gained.

As a popular saying goes, "sweet moment on the lips, forever on the hips." Experts warn that obesity is beginning to be a problem among young and old alike. But partying need not result in several excess pounds afterwards.

It takes a great amount of control and discipline not to indulge in holiday goodies, but the reward is good health and a fit body.

A study of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute revealed that in 1987, there was already a 12-percent prevalence of overweight Filipinos with two percent of them obese.

The percentage rose to 13.5 in 1993, with three percent obese. Five years later, the figure was up to 16.5 percent, the obese accounted for four percent.

Two years ago, almost a fourth of the Filipino population, 24 percent were overweight and 5 percent were obese.

Nenita Umali, weight-management dietitian and section manager of St. Luke's Weight Management Center, said the problem was caused by the change in the Filipinos' eating habits and diet, with an increase fondness for junk food like people in affluent western countries.

Umali said additional inches and pounds put people at risk for certain types of diseases.

Unnecessary pounds not only undermined one's self esteem but also posed numerous health risks. An overweight or obese individual was more at risk of gout and some types of cancer. Sleep apnea, a serious condition where breathing slowed down during sleep, was often worsened by excessive weight.

Childhood obesity, which often led to adult obesity, was also on the rise. Experts said about 1/3-2/3 of obese children became obese adults.

The two-year-old Weight Management Center is a "one-stop shop" in weight management. It is the only hospital-based center of its kind complete with a multidisciplinary team composed of physician specialists, dietitians, behavioral psychologist/psychiatrist and nurses.

It has its own gym where patients can exercise under the supervision of physical therapists.

At the center, the patient, together with weight-management consultants, set realistic weight loss goals. Factors considered when setting a goal include metabolism, psychological profile and age. It is easier for young people to lose weight than older individuals. Men more easily shed unwanted fats than women, especially menopausal ones whose metabolism has slowed considerably.

Umali said losing weight was a combination of exercise and dieting, with moderation as the key.

Call 7230101 local 5209.

Calendar sale benefits disabled

WATSONS 2006 DESK calendars are now available at all Watsons outlets nationwide for only P25 each.

A joint project of Watsons and Tahanang Walang Hagdanan (TWH), the 24-page full-color calendars feature artworks by 12 artists of TWH, a non-government organization working for the uplift of people with disability (PWD).

Proceeds from calendar sales will go to TWH. Watsons hopes to equal, if not exceed, the P1 million raised last year.

WATSONS' 2006 desk calendars feature artworks by 12 artists of Tahanang Walang Hagdanan.

Andrew Denby, Watsons general manager, says the corporate social responsibility endeavor is in line with Watsons' commitment to add quality to life.

Money raised will be used by TWH for the education, skills training, rehabilitation and employment of PWD.

Watsons offers more than 25,000 products ranging from medicines, cosmetics and toiletries to fashion items, confectionery, cards and toys. It is the largest health and beauty retailer in Asia, currently operating over 980 stores in nine markets.

HEALTHY 2006

Fruit Magic, the country's innovative fruit beverage company, offers Soy Magic for people looking for a healthier drink this 2006. The beverage is an alternative to dairy milk and fresh fruit nectars, juices and shakes. It has health-giving nutrients without the calories, sweeteners and preservatives. Other products from Fruit Magic are Fruzion smoothies, Pure Nectars and shakes. Call 3646927 or 3643621; fax 3662934 or visit www.fruitmagic.com.ph.